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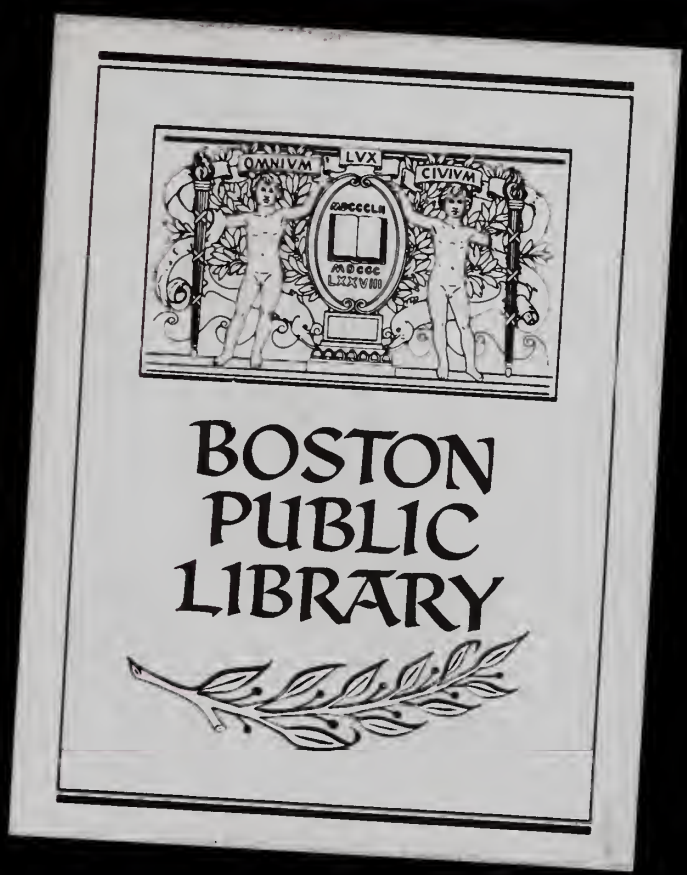

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A HISTORY AND ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL BOSTON

The land which greeted the arrival of William Blaxton in about 1623, was irregular but not rugged, in both plan and elevation. The Shawmut Peninsula's shoreline was interrupted by coves, inlets and marshes, while its topography was marked by a scattering of rounded hills, the most prominent of which was Trimountain, a name descriptive of its three linked summits. In addition to mounds and marshes, the peninsula offered its early settlers fresh spring water. In fact, from the beginning water became Boston's most valuable resource: first its springs to sustain life and then its docks to support commerce.

John Winthrop, arriving via Charlestown late in the summer of 1630, accompanied by several ships laden with Puritans, settled near a spring on the eastern shore with its natural coves and creeks, ideal for wharving out.

The Shawmut Peninsula was by no means a Garden of Eden. While it had fresh water and a developable shoreline, many of its 783 acres were hilly or marshy, bare of trees and less than ideal for farming.

Early visitors to Boston provided informative descriptions of its topographical, architectural and urban aspects. William Wood's observations in 1634 are illuminating: "Their greatest wants be Wood, and Meadow-ground, which never were in that place; being constrayned to fetch their building-timber...from the Islands...It being a necke and bare of wood... The place being too small to containe many (farms), and fittest for...Trade into England...being the chiefe place for shipping and merchandize."[1] Thus, from the beginning, Boston was dependent on the sea for long distance trade as well as for construction timber from the harbor islands.

Certainly all of the first houses were of wood, probably with thatched roofs (prohibited in 1631) and at least some with mud walls, with Governor Winthrop's being the first timber-framed house.[2]

Urban planning and control of development began early. On August 4, 1636, it was ordered that "noe house at all be built...neere unto any of the streets or laynes therein, but with the advise and consent of the overseers of the Townes occasions for the avoyding of disorderly building to the inconvenience of streets and laynes, and for the more comely and Commodious ordering of them."[3] Conditional land grants and building permits were in force during the first decade. Density was restricted by an order of October 12, 1636, that "not above one dwelling house shalbe built upon any one lott without the consent of the Townes overseers."[4]

The Book of Possessions, listing each of the 246 property owners with his estate and its boundaries, was compiled about 1645.

It is likely that the handful of original streets began informally as footpaths connecting citizens' houses with the communal areas and the waterfront. By early 1636 the town began ordering streets and lanes of specified widths to be laid out along designated routes, as the confirmation of what was to become North Street, recorded in 1643 as a "highway of two rods in breadth shall be preserved on the beach from Edward Bendall's cove

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toward John Gallop's Point."[5]

The street pattern which evolved during the 17th century responded well to the topography and the needs of the town. It is not surprising that the town fathers chose not to impose a grid on this undulating and irregular peninsula, since the English towns from which then migrated retained, as many do today, their late medieval plans, with streets characterized by warped and winding lengths and expanding and contracting widths. The medieval city took its irregular form from the vagaries of land allocation and from the interaction of public and private space, the two being defined according to their degree of penetrability. Streets were as narrow as possible while allowing for the transit of goods and passage of persons, widening occasionally for reasons of commerce. A portion of State Street was 113 feet wide for that purpose, permitting construction of the first Town House with its street-level market, in 1657-59. Streets, rather than squares or plazas, were the public spaces of the medieval city. Boston's several "squares" that evolved during the 17th and 18th centuries were simply the expanded junctions of two or more streets.

Boston had developed considerably by 1654, with some masonry buildings in evidence, when Captain Edward Johnson wrote, "The chiefe Edifice of this City-like Towne is crowded on the Seabanks, and wharfed out with great industry and cost, the buildings beautiful and large, some fairly set forth with Brick, Tile, Stone and Slate, and orderly placed with comley streets, whose continual inlargement presages some sumptuous City."[6]

A somewhat different picture emerges from a French protestant refugee's statement in 1687 that "the Town is almost wholly built of wooden Houses; but since there have been some ravages by Fire, building of Wood is no longer allowed, so that at present writing very handsome Houses of Brick are going up."[7]

Fire was the most persistent influence on the development of Boston from 1653, the date of the first Great Fire until the really Great Fire of 1872. Not only have large sections of the central district been destroyed periodically, but the influence on building materials and techniques, as well as on street enlargement has been extensive. From 1631 to 1872 there have been innumerable small fires, about two dozen major fires and six Great Fires, with each destroying a hundred of more buildings.

Following the August 8, 1679 fire, which destroyed 80 houses, 70 warehouses and several vessels near the Town Dock, the General Court enacted the following law: "The Court...Do therefore order & enact that henceforth no dwelling house in Boston shall be erected & set up except of stone or brick, & covered with slate or Tyle."[8] This was one of several largely unsuccessful attempts over the years to limit the spread of fires through legislation. Not only was the cost of masonry construction substantially more than wood, but suitable foundations were often difficult to lay down since so much of the land was marshy.

The town settled on the issuance of building permits, often with conditions, as a means of controlling the continued proliferation of wooden buildings. This gave rise to the "Book of Timber Buildings", a compilation of permits granted between 1709 and 1729, setting such conditions as brick ends, slated roof, rough cast and maintaining distances between buildings. For example, on October 5, 1710, the Church of England received permission "to Erect with Timber on the Land granted them by the Town, an Addition to the sd Church they promising to ruff cast or Plaister the sd Building to Secure it from fire."[9]

Two of the more notable 17th century buildings, the Triangular Warehouse and the Old Feather Store, were built near the Town Dock in 1680,

immediately following the 1679 fire. The warehouse, triangular in shape, two stories high with a tall hip roof and massive turrets at each corner, formerly of timber, was rebuilt after the fire in brick. The Old Feather Store, a multi-gabled, two-tenement, late medieval English style timber structure had a projecting second story and a rough cast exterior. Both of these buildings were demolished during the 19th century in the name of progress: the warehouse to make way for Quincy Market in 1824, and the Feather Store in 1860, for the widening of Anne (North) Street.[10]

A rather more elegant and suburban situation surrounded the two-story, Flemish-gabled, brick mansion house which Peter Sergeant constructed on a large, landscaped plot well back from what is now Washington Street in 1679. It was purchased in 1715 by the Province, a third story was added, and it was thereafter known as the Province House. It survived in some form until 1922.

The eastern shore of the original Shawmut Peninsula arced around Great Cove which, in turn, was dented by two smaller coves on either side of what is now State Street. Great Cove began to curve inward just north of present day Lewis Wharf, returning at the South Battery, just above Rowes Wharf. The northernmost subsidiary cove (under Faneuil Hall) was first known as Bendall's Cove, then by the 1640s as Bendall's Dock and, after 1673, as the Town Dock. It had an inlet to the north later called Mill Creek. Its southern neighbor, a less defined area, was called Shelter Cove, fed by two small creeks converging as Shelter Creek, surrounded by marsh.

The first suggestion of Bendall's Cove's destiny was a reference to the "Common landing place between the 2 Creekes" in the Town Records for July 1, 1634. On September 9, 1641, the Town granted to Valentine Hill and his associates "all the wast ground...from the Point of the Marish... and so round by Edward Bendall's...for so many yeares as the Charge they shall bestowe...and in Building, making and repairing such wharfes, creekes or coves within this five yeares now next Coming."[11] Following their wharving out of the dock, they were given an 80-year lease on the property.[12]

In succeeding years Hill and Bendall sold off much of their land around the dock including a parcel of 30 feet to Peter Oliver in 1651, on condition that Oliver make up the head sill of the wharf and construct a 20-by-40-foot warehouse within three weeks. Thus Bendall's Dock became the first topographical alteration of the Shawmut Peninsula.

Eight years later, James Johnson, Peter Oliver and Amos Richardson acquired "certain parcels of Marish Land" from John Leverett, "on the South side of sd. Creeke made through the whole Marish being from the sd. Creeke about one quarter of an Acre."[13] On June 20, 1679, Richard Waldren signed the following oath: "These may Certify...That in the years 1659 and 1660 myself did Digg the part of the Dock called Mr. Peter Olivers Dock...having had built a Warehouse & part of a Wharfe next the Sea."[14]

Development of the area surrounding Oliver's Dock was dominated by Peter Oliver and his descendents until well into the 18th century. While he had sold many of the warehouses he had built prior to his death in 1670, there remained in his estate 16 parcels of land with buildings, plus other warehouses and tenements, which were divided in 1685 among his five surviving children, Nathaniel, James, Daniel, Sara Noyes and Mary, wife of Nathaniel Williams. All of these properties were strung out along what are Water, Kilby, Milk and Oliver Streets.[15] This and the succeeding two generations of Olivers were active in the acquisition and development of property in the vicinity of Oliver's Dock.

Bendall's Dock and Oliver's Dock became important reference points and loci for development up to the end of the 18th century. Throughout this extended period both areas supported a mix of uses: residential,

waterfront related, craft and commercial. Most of the non-residential buildings were wood warehouses, of one or two stories, but there were salthouses, bakehouses,. brewhouses and cooper's shops as well. Both of these docks spawned numerous individual wharves and docks strung out along the rim of Great Cove which, in time, replaced the residential estates overlooking the water.

In 1647, Benjamin Ward was given "libertye to wharf afore his on propretye Beniamin Ward hath bought of the town the eight part of the marish that is next to him."[16] It was here that Ward began what became, under his direction and that of several generations of Hallowells, the leading shipyard in Boston, surviving until about 1800.

One of the largest construction projects ever attempted in Boston was begun on the waterfront in 1673 for "erectinge of a wall or wharfe upon the flatts before the towne from the sconce to Capt. Samuell Skarlets wharfe...for the securitie of the towne."[17] The "Barricado" was a fortified breakwater 2,200 feet long, 15 feet high and 20 feet wide at the top, constructed by 41 volunteer "undertakers" who received grants of marsh land in exchange for their labors.

Mill Cove, a northern indentation similar to Great Cove, was granted in 1643 to Henry Symons, George Burden, John Buttons, John Hill, on condition that they build one or more corn mills. Their agreement with the town stated that "if they shall carry their millstreame through the Marish on the northeast end of goodman Lowe's howse, they have sixty foot in breadth throughout the sayd marish granted unto them."[18] This became Mill Creek, eventually filled in as Blackstone Street by 1831.[19]

On September 22, 1701, the Selectmen were ordered "to Assign & Fix Names, unto the several Streets and Lanes within this Town,"[20] which were previously nameless. This was accomplished in 1708, with the total adding up to 110, 64 of which were at least partially within the study area.

John Bonner's map of 1722, the earliest surviving map of Boston, shows 73 streets and rudiments of streets later extended, within the study area, but names only 41 of these. He also lists total houses at "near" 3,000, of which 1,000 are brick. 960 buildings are within the study area, 153 detached and 807 in groups or rows of two or more. The Bonner map was reissued with revisions in 1733, 1743 and 1769. The 1769 map shows eight additional streets, but no major topographical changes.

The late medieval character of the town is quite apparent in Bonner's layout of streets and cartoons of the buildings. The older part around the Town Dock and King (State) Street contains many small, irregular blocks edged by long rows of one, two and three-story buildings along expanding and contracting lanes. Many of the blocks have the character of irregular quadrangles, with rows of buildings enclosing relatively open space. Beyond Cornhill (Washington), Water and Hanover Streets, the blocks enlarge and the density decreases. In the early years most of the open land was used for pasture. The larger blocks on Bonner's map suggest vestiges of these pastures behind the houses.

Early in October, 1711, The Boston News-Letter reported that "on Tuesday the second of October...a Fire broke out in an old Tenement within a back yard in Cornhill, near to the First Meeting-House...made its progress throughout Cornhill...and on both sides of the upper parts of King and Queen (Court) Street; the Town House and the Meeting-House, with many fair Buildings were Consumed." In all, 100 buildings were destroyed in the heart of town.

The First Church, originally built of wood in 1632 on the present site of the Second Brazer Building at State, Devonshire and Quaker Lane, was replaced in 1640 by a new meeting house located in Cornhill Square, a

site presently occupied by the One Boston Place tower. The new building, also of wood was consumed by the 1711 fire. It was rebuilt of brick in 1713 and survived until replaced by Jcy's Building in 1808.

The 1657 wood Town House was replaced with a brick structure after the fire of 1711, to house both town and provincial governments, plus courts and a merchants exchange. This building in turn burned on December 9, 1747, but the walls survived as they do today.

The Old South Meeting House, on the corner of Milk and Washingtcn Streets, was constructed by Joshua Blanchard in 1729, replacing the 1669 Third Church, which had supplanted the house of Governor Winthrop after his death in 1649.

Cnly three 18th century houses survive in the study area, all of them brick. The Old Corner Bookstore, at the corner of Washington and School Streets, was built immediately after the 1711 fire by Thomas Crease, an apothecary. The other two are located in the Blackstone Block: the Capen House on Union Street, dating from about 1714, an oyster house since 1826, and the Ebenezer Hancock House on Marshall Street, built by his uncle, Thomas Hancock, about 1760.

The process of widening and smoothing the edges of Boston's crooked and narrow streets as a deterrent to the spread of fire and to accommodate traffic, gained its impetus in the late 17th century by an act of the General Court of June 8, 1692, concerning compensation for land takings which mentioned "where any desolation has happened to regulate and enlarge other narrow or Crooked Lanes of Passages."

The 18th century saw an increasing number of street widenings, such as Pudding Lane (Devonshire Street) being widened to 14 feet in 1712,[21] and part of Anne Street being enlarged in 1722.[22]

Not only were Boston's early streets crooked and warped, but their edges were, in many cases, extremely irregular due to the jutting out of buildings. It was not uncommon for the town to grant individual property owners permission to intrude their houses and barns into the rights of way during the 17th century. For example, on October 2, 1644, Deacon Eliot was granted liberty "to sett out his barne six or eight foot into the street."[23] While this made for a picturesque town with varied and surprising vistas, the town officials during the 18th century no doubt looked on streets more in terms of the flow of traffic than as fascinating gathering places.

A number of new streets came into being during the 1700s and existing streets were extended, some of which sub-divided larger blocks which still contained pasture land. On May 29, 1711, the Selectmen agreed "to continue Trea-mount Street upon the Hill...the Sd way at the corner of Mr Belknaps old House nearest Capt. Southacks Land to be eighteen feet wide and to continue...upon a Northerly line, until it come even...with the North corner of sd Stanifords Land."[24]

With the increase in commerce by the early 18th century, the lack of a deep water wharf to provide anchorage for larger sailing ships became critical. On October 20, 1708, the General Court appointed a committee to provide a plan for general waterfront improvements. The November 5, 1709 report recommended that "Liberty be Granted for King Street to be Continued in a Straight line from the Circular Line (a previously established inviolate pierhead limit) to Low water-Mark forty five foot in width."[25] At a town meeting the following month, Oliver Noyes, James Barnes, Daniel Oliver, John George, John Gerrish and Anthony Stoddard, gentlemen, presented a proposal "for the wharfing and carrying out of King Street, Further Easterly...will at our own Cost and Charge Erect and build a Wharffe." On May 17, 1710, an indenture between the Selectmen and the Proprietors was signed.[26]

The Book of Timber Buildings entry for March 1, 1710, recorded permission granted to Oliver Noyes and company to "Erect a Range of Buildings of timber for warehouses...on the North side of sd Range of Wharffe." By 1715 the last 600-foot section of wharf was in place, bringing its total length to 1,586 feet, its width being 54 feet. A divisional agreement among the proprietors dated March 7, 1717, apportioned the 24 lots "together with the Structures Edifices and buildings on the said Several Lotts and Divisions now standing."[27]

Long Wharf, or Boston Pier, underwent many changes and additions over its history. In 1794 it was described as having "a long range of handsome warehouses...built of wood."[28] In 1804, Selectmens Minutes referred to the "new Brick Stores at the head of Long Wharf,"[29] and a plan dated March 18, 1815, shows 10 blocks of stores in line plus one across the deep water end.[30] A July 8, 1831 plan has eight ranges of stores, five of brick, one of wood, two unidentified as to material.[31] Another plan shows "a parcel of land with the ten stores to be built thereon before said thirtieth Day of September...Eighteen hundred and fifty five."[32] This latter group still stands on Long Wharfe as the granite Custom House Block, designed by Isaiah Rogers. The adjacent brick row probably dates from the early 19th century.

24 wharves of various sizes appear on Bonner's 1722 map in Great Cove, most well populated with warehouses. The largest of these,other than Long Wharf was Clark's Wharf which eventually joined Lewis Wharf as its northern edge. The updated Bonner map for 1769 shows the same, renamed Hancock's Wharf. It also shows Rowes Wharf for the first time, located immediately south of the Battery. Col. Jacob Wendell had maintained the wharf for some time before conveying it to John Row in 1764.

As early as 1677 the waterfront had a dry dock, and in 1714 the first schooners were built in Boston. In 1748 there were 430 entries of ships from foreign ports, 725 by 1795 and 938 in 1806. The 1796 Boston Directory lists about 80 wharves in the town.

As the waterfront expanded in the early 18th century, Bendall's Dock became less a factor in commerce, with pressure to fill the dock increasing. On July 1, 1728, the town ordered "the whole Southern part of the Dock to be filled up, and a Street of Suitable bredth to be layed out...and a Rainge of Low Shops to be Erected."[33] This was timely, for in 1733 the "vacant place at or near the Town Dock be on of the Places" for a market.[34]

A 1738 plan shows the dock being rather narrow with "eight small shops to Billings corner" on the south side, which had been filled, and "2 stores belong to Mr. Palmer" in "Market Place".

Two years later Peter Faneuil, a wealthy merchant of French Huguenot extraction, offered "to Erect and Build a noble and compleat Structure or Edifice" for a market.[35] The vote to accept, taken at a Town Meeting on July 2, 1740, passed by the narrow margin of 367 to 360. On September 2, "Mr. Joshua Blanchard presenting a Plan, from Peter Faneuil, Esq. of a House for a market, to be built on Dock Square...Desiring the Select men would lay out the Ground in Order to begin the Foundation; The Select men accordingly met, went on the place...Mark'd and StakId out a Piece of Ground for that use, measuring in length from the lower or Easterly end fronting the Ware houses in Merchants Row, One hundred feet, and in Breadth Forty feet."[36]

On August 20, 1742, "Mr. Samuel Ruggles who was Employed in Building the Market house...Waited on the Select men by order of Peter Faneuil Esq & delivered them the Key of said House which the accordingly received."[37]

According to a manuscript written by Charles Bulfinch at the time of his enlargement of the Hall in 1806, the original building was "completed in a most substantial and elegant manner in September, 1742, after a design of Mr. Smibert," who was, no doubt, John Smibert, the prominent artist, who was to complete a full length portrait of the doner a few months before

Faneuil's death in 1743.

Fire struck Faneuil Hall and neighboring shops on January 13, 1761, leaving only the brick walls standing. The town voted to repair the building on March 23rd, "to have the Roof Slated, the Window Frames of Stone and the Ornaments with as little Wooden work as possible."[38]

The building which stands today is an enlargement of the Smibert structure authorized on May 23, 1805, with Bulfinch as architect. The same design elements were retained, but the building was enlarged, from two stories to three and from three bays in width to seven, with the length kept at nine bays.

After 1742 the town began nibbling away at what remained of the dock, first by filling up the head of the dock in 1747 and finally completing the job in 1784.[39]

Ten months prior to the Faneuil Hall fire, Boston's worst confligration up to that time swept eastward from Cornhill across Oliver's Dock to the water. In all, 349 buildings were destroyed by the March 20, 1760 fire, including 174 houses and 175 warehouses. Following the fire, the Great and General Court appointed a committee to facilitate rebuilding of the burned area. Meeting on April 1, 1760, the committee approved various applications, typical of which was Mr. David Spears: "Liberty is granted him to rebuild his Dwelling house in Leveretts Lane (Congress Street), provided he build the same with Stone or Brick and cover with Slate or Tile." At its meeting on April 4th, the committee "agreed that it is necessary that Pudding Lane be widened and...continued...to Milk Street," also "that Mackrel Lane should be made Wider and...continued near upon a Strait line to Milk Street." Other streets were enlarged as well, including Water Street which was "enlarged and widened 14' 10"."[40]

On June 20, 1761, the General Court passed yet another act aimed at controlling construction with wood.

The rise in wealth of the merchant traders of Boston during the 18th century spawned a number of "mansion houses" particularly on Beacon Street, on the eastern slope of Cotton Hill, Marlborough (Washington) Street, Milk Street and, later, in Bowdoin Square. These houses were often accompanied by out buildings and surrounded by gardens.

Not too long after 1640, when School and Beacon Streets were ordered laid out "from Mr. Atherton Haulghes to the Centry Hill",[41] the eastern and southeastern slope of Beacon Hill became a highly desirable residential area. This was the eastern peak of Trimountain called Cotton Hill because the Rev. John Cotton (1584-1652) had a house on 1½ acres of its lower slope. Sir Henry Vane lived with Cotton during his term as governor in 1636-37. Governors John Endicott and Richard Bellingham both lived on the slope as well. Humphrey Davy acquired Bellingham's property in 1663[42] which measured 140 feet on Tremont and 325 feet deep. In 1710 Andrew Faneuil purchased the estate with "a stone dwelling-house" from Davy's two sons, and built a three-story mansion house set well back from Tremont Street, which his nephew, Peter, inherited in 1738. Beside it stood another three-story mansion house constructed by William Vassall in 1758 and conveyed to Gardiner Greene in 1803. This estate was noted for its terraces, gardens and peacocks.[43]

James Penn owned a mansion house at the corner of Tremont and Beacon in 1658. Developer and merchant David Hinckley acquired the abutting property at the corner of Beacon and "a new street called Somerset street" on January 19, 1810, which had on it "the old stone house" shown on a plan as an L-shaped "Mansion house" 30 by 46½ feet with a detached barn on the Somerset corner.[44] Hinckley demolished the complex and built his own three-story, granite double mansion house on the site of the barn. It was

sold to the Somerset Club in 1852 and became the Congregational House in 1873.

The block on the north side of Beacon between Bowdoin and Somerset Streets was taken up by three mansion houses occupied in the mid to late 18th century by Governor James Bowdoin, Edward Bromfield, Jr. and David Sears, Sr. The three-story Bromfield mansion house had been built by 1722 (on Bonner's map) and was set back from the street up three steep flights of steps. It was demolished in 1845 during the cutting down of the hill for Ashburton Place.

An important amenity introduced into Boston just before the Revolution was the town's first street lights. In 1773 the committee determined that "white Globe lights will answer better than Square ones."[45] It was reported that John Boylston had purchased the oil lamps in London "very cheap" and by March 30, 1774, 310 had been erected.[46] Gas lights were first exhibited on November 26, 1815, pipes were laid beginning in 1826, and the first lamp was illuminated in Dock Square in 1829. There were 20 such lamps in 1832 and by 1880 there were 10,139 gas lights, 2,276 oil lamps, and one electric light, that on display in Scollay Squre.[47]

The decades around the Revolutionary War were periods of developmental stagnation. Thousands of residents left town, trade was drastically restricted, and even fires seemed less destructive. In his first letter from Boston in 1781, the Count de Rochambeau suggested the town's condition in stating that Boston "did not seem to us a modern settlement so much as an ancient city."[48]

Writing in 1794, Thomas Pemberton observed that "many large spots of land still remain vacant. The houses are built chiefly of pine and oak, in general about three stories high. There are however many large handsome brick houses... In Cornhill...the houses are all built of brick, the front of the lower floors generally occupied as shops for the sale of dry goods etc ...irregularity of their height, no two adjoining houses being equal in height."[49] The 1796 Boston Directory sets the number of houses in Boston at 2,376 with 97 streets, 36 lanes, 26 alleys and 18 courts, with most of them being "irregular and not very convenient, State Street, Common Street and a few others are exceptions."

For the United States Direct Tax of 1798, an inventory and assessment of all properties in the town was taken. Within the study area of 75 streets, lanes, wharves, etc., there were about 370 commercial buildings and 744 dwellings for a total of about 1,114, plus 145 outbuildings. 11 streets were exclusively commercial, 26 residential and 38 mixed. The 52 buildings on Cornhill, most of which contained stores, were classed as residential, making the mix of uses even more pervasive. Of those buildings where the stories were listed, 13 were one-story, 327 were two-story, 400 were three-story. Where materials were listed, 489 were wood, 133 wood and brick, 356 brick, plus three part stone and three part rough cast.

Prior to the post-Revolution Federal period, architects were almost unknown in Boston. Buildings were designed by those who constructed them, housewrights, carpenters and masons, either from precedent and practicality or from pattern books. Three exceptions stand out from the mid to late Provincial era: John Smibert, portrait painter, who designed Faneuil Hall in 1740, Peter Harrison, a gentleman architect from Newport, who supplied the plans for King's Chapel in 1748, and Thomas Dawes, a builder turned architect, who was responsible for the design of the Brattle Square Church in 1772, among other buildings.

The year 1787 marked the beginning of a new era, both in architectural design and in urban planning. This was the year that Charles Bulfinch returned to Boston from a two-year stay in England and on the continent, fresh with new design ideas promoted by Robert Adam and the British neo-classicists. He returned to a colonial town architecturally, with many

of its buildings and their arrangement still exhibiting a medieval character. It was a town predominently of wood when he arrived, and a city of brick when he departed for Washington 30 years later. The changes which Bulfinch was able to plan and promulgate, by virtue of his skill and sensibility as a gentleman architect and his official positions as town architect, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen for 19 years, were the most far reaching in Boston's history prior to the 1960s.

Bulfinch introduced a new standard of elegance in Boston architecture in his mansion houses, and in his public and institutional buildings, while at another level reordering vernacular architecture and town planning in a pragmatic and almost simplistic fashion. Whereas colonial rows of buildings were often irregular in height and frontage, Bulfinch introduced the smooth-faced row of identical buildings, simply but elegantly detailed in such instances as Bulfinch Row (1804) on Park Street and Colonnade Row (1811) on Tremont Street, and almost without detail in Broad and India Street warehouses. The row house and the range of shops or warehouses became the pattern of development through the first half of the 19th century.

It was Bulfinch's intention, as well as that of his clients, a new breed of old family merchant developers, to bring a more obvious order to the seemingly chaotic town. In laying out streets on newly reclaimed land, shown on his plans for the Broad Street Association in 1805 and 1808, and for the Mill Pond in 1808, he introduced the grid to Boston, carefully grafting it onto the old system of streets.

On January 31, 1803, the town approved still another masonry building law, "That all buildings exceeding ten feet in hight shall be built wholly of brick of stone."[50] This time enforcement was less of a problem, with Bulfinch as both Chaiman of the Selectmen and Chief of Police. Ironically, however, four years after Bulfinch had left town in 1817, the town voted to repeal the law and permit wooded dwelling houses, subject to restrictions.

Streets continued to be enlarged and extended during these decades and amenities were added such as sidewalks. Merchant's Lane and the west entrance into Bowdoin Square were widened in 1805,[51] and Middlecott Street was extended to Beacon and renamed Bowdoin Street in 1807.[52]

China trade began for Boston in 1787, coincidentally the year of Bulfinch's return from abroad, with the far east voyage of the ship, Columbia; it therefore seems appropriate that Bulfinch should be asscciated with a series of interrelated projects that would transform the southern arc of Boston's waterfront from a rundown and haphazard collection of warehouses, shanties and wharves into a well ordered community of commerce consisting of broad streets edged by blocks of handsome brick warehouses extending out on spacious piers.

It was the Broad Street Association, incorporated in 1805 in an effort to re-establish Boston as a leading port, became the principal force in the redevelopment of the waterfront and warehouse district south of Long Wharf, with Harrison Gray Otis, Francis Cabot Lowell, James Lloyd, Jr., and Uriah Cotting, merchants, as partners and Bulfinch as planner.

The initial scheme was to provide a uniform shoreline by filling in around old wharves and flats, construction of a single generous wharf and laying out of new streets. Batterymarch Street was widened, extended and renamed, in part, Broad Street. Fill was added, and India Street, named in 1804, was laid out along the new shore line. The two were connected by several narrower cross streets.

On May 24, 1804, Rev. William Bently noted while visiting Boston from Salem, "the new wharf near Battery March is begun." The earliest sales agreement among the Lowell papers regarding India Wharf, dated June 22, 1803,

stated that Lowell, Cotting and Henry Jackson "are building or about to build ten brick stores on or near Battery March...extending from said street toward the sea...according to a plan drawn by Charles Bulfinch, Esq." They were to be brick, four stories, "ornamented with a row of Marble ribbon."[53] Contracts for the main building, "a block of thirty four stores", were signed in November 1804 and April 1805. The central block was completed in 1806.

Two plans by Bulfinch, one dated September 5, 1805, show seven blocks of parcels along Broad, India, Central and Milk Streets "intended for sale by the Broad Street Association."[54] Another plan, dated April 8, 1808, showing six blocks between Broad and India Streets, accompanied a division of properties indenture among Otis, Lowell, Cotting and Lloyd with restrictions and conditions applying to buildings to be built on the lots.[55]

The 1807 Boston Directory described the area as follows: Here are erected about 60 brick stores, 40 of them 5 stories high... These streets, wharf and buildings...form, together, the most elegant and commodious seat for mercantile business in the U.S." In 1810 the Custom House was relocated from the corner of Flag Alley and State Street to a new building designed by Uriah Cotting in Custom House Street, one of the connecting streets between Broad and India, where it remained until the present Custom House was completed in 1847.

On April 19, 1815, the Broad Street quartet plus Ebenezer Francis, David Hinckley and Israel Thorndike conveyed the "whole estate" to Central Wharf and Wet Dock Corporation. Writing in 1817, Shubael Bell, Senior Warden of Christ Church observed: "In the course of the last year, Central Wharf, and the extensive range of Stores which it supports was begun and compleated... The number of stores are fifty four, and the length of the tier nearly thirteen hundred feet of four Stories... The wharf is already lined with vessels and crowded with business."[56] India and Central wharves survived intact until they were cut through for Atlantic Avenue in 1868.

By 1822, when Boston became a city, the Federal period had ended and the Greek Revival era in architecture was beginning. Also, brick was giving way to granite as the preferred facade material. A handful of architects who trained with Bulfinch were left to pursue the emerging style. One of them was Alexander Parris, who was selected by Mayor Josiah Quincy to design an elongated two-story granite market building, 555 feet long, flanked by two rows of four-story granite-faced warehouses of similar length, in an attempt to bring the new orderliness to the Faneuil Hall/Dock Square area. Six new streets without curves were formed. This was the beginning of a process which would replace the dozen and a half wharves between Long Wharf and Lewis Wharf within a few years. Two plans dated May 30 and November 12, 1827, show a new "Marginal Street" 65 feet wide cutting diagonally from Lewis Wharf to connect with Commercial Street at the foot of the new market and warehouses. All streets are straight and wide.[57]

The cornerstone of the Chelmsford granite Quincy Market building was laid April 25, 1825. It opened August 26, 1826.

Following the extension of Commercial Street, the new wharves were completed in a relatively short time. T-Wharf, which began in the early 18th century as a remnant of the Barricado attached to the north side of Long Wharf, kept extending its length seaward until in the 1830s it ranged as far out as Long Wharf.

City Wharf was constructed off Commercial Street soon after the market was completed. A plan of May 1, 1832, shows a single row of "stores now building."[58] By 1853 it had fused with Long Wharf and by April 3, 1856, Mercantile Wharf had been built on its northern side, with a range of lots and buildings designed by Gridley Bryant under construction, and a new street called Mercantile Street at the water's edge.[59]

The granite range of 32 bays and 66 stores on Commercial Wharf, designed by Isaiah Rogers, is shown on the May 1, 1832 plan as "Stores now building." Lewis Wharf acquired its granite row, designed by Richard Bond, in 1836-40.

By 1857 the transformation of the arc of Great Cove into a well ordered arrangement of six extended piers with long ranges of masonry warehouses, was complete. It was during the 1850s that harbor activity reached its peak. After the Civil War, the waterfront's long decline began, with the age of steam and competition from the railroads which had been building since the 1830s.

From the earliest days Anne and Fish Streets (combined as North Street in 1852) ran parallel to the shore with wharves projecting from their eastern edge. With the laying out of Commercial Street in 1827 and filling the intervening space, Anne and Fish moved well inland. Fulton Street plus several cross streets were engraved on this newly filled land. Fulton Street acquired several four-story brick commercial blocks with granite bases in 1838, many of which still stand in varying degrees of alteration. In 1844 Ferry, Barrett and Shoe and Leather Streets were covered with similar four-story brick warehouses.

The influence of Bulfinch's brick row house and warehouse row model spread rapidly during the first two decades of the 19th century, promoted by such merchant developers as Harrison Gray Otis and Uriah Cotting. By 1816 their new Cornhill Corporation had gained permission to cut a new street connecting Scollay and Dock Squares and sell lots which were occupied with brick stores late in the same year. Originally called Cheapside, the street was renamed Cornhill in 1829. Part of the row, substantially altered in the 1850s, survives today as Sears Crescent.

16 years earlier, the first "planned development" in the Liberty Square area was put together by John, Thomas and Jonathan Harris, merchants, who had purchased Woodward's Wharf, abutting Oliver's Dock, in 1793.[60] They received permission to fill up what was left of Oliver's Dock in 1799.[61] In 1800 the Proprietors subdivided the western portion of the wharf into 20 lots divided into four groups, which were sold off individually subject to the same type of strict conditions appearing slightly later in the Broad/India Street developments. Most of these buildings were destroyed in the fire of April 9, 1825, which swept along Kilby Street from State through Liberty Square, consuming 53 structures in its path.

The present-day shape of Liberty Square was essentially formed on completion of the Harris development shortly after 1800. It had, however, been a clearly identifiable, significant place since Oliver's Dock was wharved out in 1660. The name was officially changed to Liberty Square on January 24, 1793, in celebration of the French Revolution. Although the buildings which currently bound the square date from 1873 to 1926, it is the only square from the 17th and 18th centuries in central Boston to retain its integrity.

Following Gardiner Greene's death in 1832, Patrick Tracy Jackson, who, with Francis Cabot Lowell had set up the country's first complete cotton mill in Waltham in 1813, purchased the Greene estate along with other mansion houses on the east slope of Cotton Hill and proceeded to demolish them and cut down the hill, between May 5 and October 5, 1835. On October 6th he sold the lots at auction, according to a plan of the same date showing contiguous lots organized around a new square, called Phillips Place, with rows facing Somerset and Tremont Streets as well.[62] There were 64 lots in all and they carried the, by then, standard conditions. The final product was a group of fairly uniform red brick three-and four-story row houses, some with bow fronts. Phillips Place was renamed Pemberton Square in 1838 and the two rows on Tremont were named Tremont Row in 1847.

The completion of George Clough's massive granite Suffolk County Court House in 1891 signaled the end of Pemberton Square as a residential enclave. The remaining buildings succumbed to Center Plaza in the 1960s.

By 1840 few buildings remained residential between Pemberton Square and the waterfront. During this period many of the earlier brick and wood buildings were replaced with blocks of stores, mostly with granite fronts. As had been the case in the preceeding decades, the commercial row was the pattern rather than the individual building. Nathaniel Dearborn, writing in Boston Notions in 1848, reported three granite blocks and one brick block built on State Street from 1845 to 1847, four blocks plus four individual buildings of granite on Washington from 1843 to 1846, and eight blocks of stores and warehouses on Milk Street from 1844 to 1846, including the "Old South Block" of three warehouses on the site of the 1710 Parsonage House behind the meeting house.

One of Boston's most impressive Greek Revival granite buildings of this period was the new Custom House authorized by Congress in 1835 and constructed between 1837 and 1847, from plans by Ammi Burnham Young. It was a monumental Doric temple capped by a Roman dome, set on 3,000 wood piles on filled land fronting on India Street, between Long and Central Wharves. Ten years after completing of the Custom House, the shoreline between these two wharves was again extended farther out into the dock for a new block of granite warehouses. Attached to a deed dated June 7, 1857, were the catalog and terms of sale for the 16 warehouse lots plus the "Architect's Circular" containing a detailed description of the warehouses to be erected as designed by Gridley J.F. Bryant, to be named the State Street Block. The resulting open space which surrounded the Custom House was named McKinley Square in 1902. In 1913-15 Boston's first skyscraper was erected over the Custom House dome, designed by Peabody and Stearns.

The 1850s and 1860s saw the beginnings of a return to the individualization of buildings. While in most cases they were not free standing, they tended more and more toward elaborate detail which set them decoratively apart from their abutters. The strong vertical and horizontal simplicity of the Greek Revival gave way to a variety of more picturesque styles. Granite continued the preferred facade material but sandstone and cast iron appeared as well. Among the few surviving examples are the Renaissance Revival granite warehouse at 50 Broad Street of 1853 by Charles E. Parker, the 1855 brownstone building at 52 Devonshire Street by Gridley Bryant, the ca 1859 Renaissance Revival cast iron building at 112-116 State Street, and 33 Union Street, a five-story tan sandstone Italianate loft building dating from 1861.

By the time of Boston's worst fire on November 9, 1872, these picturesque styles were reaching their zenith. While the fire was nothing short of disastrous, it provided an opportunity for rebuilding "Commercial Palaces" of even greater exhuberance. One major casualty of the fire was granite as the preferred material due to its spalling and exploding under extreme heat. In its place were brick, various colored sandstones and marble, although granite reappeared to some degree later. The scale of the new buildings was, in general, not substantially greater than those built immediately before the fire, but the trend toward individualizing the designs continued. Boston's building department was fathered by the fire.

Post Office Square came into being soon after the fire, in 1873. The new Post Office, described as "an enormous pile of Cape-Ann granite, with an iron roof,"[63] was half built at the time, having been started in 1869. It was completed in 1885.

Three other major changes in the city occurred just prior to the 1872 fire. On December 18, 1868, Mayor Shurtleff approved a City Council vote to

lay out Atlantic Avenue from Broad Street at Rowes Wharf to Commercial Street at Eastern Avenue, with fill to come from Fort Hill. Straight as an arrow and 100 feet wide, Atlantic Avenue, following the approximate trail of the Barricade, sliced through India, Central, Long, T, Commercial and Lewis Wharves, splitting their elegant masonry rows asunder. The avenue was completed and the land behind it filled by 1872, and once stately Fort Hill and its many buildings were gone. The newly filled land was quickly built up, populated with warehouse blocks and the Clinton and Mercantile Markets, a series of ornamented sheet-metal-covered structures built in 1873 and replaced by Waterfront Park a little over a century later. In 1901 Atlantic Avenue acquired an elevated trolley line which was demolished in 1942.

Washington was extended, again in a straight line, from Cornhill to Haymarket Square on November 6, 1872. The wide new street cut through a series of buildings and streets, some at extreme acute angles, leaving stiletto-sharp corners. Haymarket Square had been laid out in 1839 and was presided over by the graceful Greek Revival facade of the Boston and Maine Depot.

Most of the buildings lost in the 1872 fire had been replaced within a few years. By 1880 the exhuberant Commercial Palace era was over and there was a return to less picturesque styles. At the same time buildings began increasing more dramatically in height and bulk. Two notable buildings constructed on Tremont Street in 1883, both designed by Bradlee, Winslow and Wetherell, exhibit this new restraint of detail and increased bulk. They are the seven-story red brick and brownstone Hemenway Building at the corner of Court Street and the six-story sandstone Phillips Building at the corner of Hamilton Place, across from the Park Street Church, elegantly detailed in the late Renaissance Revival style. The 10-story Fisk Building and the 11-story Exchange Building, built in 1889 and 1891 at 89 and 53 State Street, both designed by Peabody and Stearns, were robust examples of the Renaissance Revival mode rendered in quarry-faced granite, on the verge of being skyscrapers.

Boston's first and finest skyscraper, the 14-story Ames Building at One Court Street, hovered over the skyline from 1889 until the Custom House rose to 30 stories in 1915. The Ames Building, of ashlar and quarry-faced granite, was designed by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, successor firm to H.H. Richardson, in the Romanesque Revival variation that he perfected. Also by the same firm is the richly textured Flour and Grain Exchange of 1892 at Milk and India Streets. Diagonally across from the Ames Building are two significant free-standing towers, typical in height of much of State Street in the 1890s and early 1900s, the 11-story Second Brazer Building of 1896, an elaborately detailed Beaux Arts limestone building by Cass Gilbert, on the First Church site, and the Worthington Building, a 10-story brick and limestone, steel frame structure by Carl Fehmer, built in 1894.

Limestone was to become the material most widely used for the Classical Revival office buildings of the first quarter of the 20th century. The nine-story International Trust Building at 45 Milk Street, built in two sections in 1893 and 1906 from plans of William G. Preston, is one of the earliest and most effective uses of this rather neutral material.

There are 13 buildings built between 1893 and 1934 occupying entire blocks in the study area, indicative of the change in bulk from earlier decades. The pace of building slowed and the quality of design lowered during the two decades from 1926 to 1947. The 14-story Batterymarch Building by Harold Field Kellogg, is an unusual brick Art Deco example which rose on its own block in 1927-28. The 22-story limestone and granite Post Office replaced its Second Empire predecessor in 1934, with Cram and Fergusson as architects.

There were few changes in the street pattern between the 1870s and 1948.

Following the Y-shaped path formed by State and Court Streets as the base, and Tremont Street and its extensions from Park through Bowdoin Square as the arms, through some of its history, it is possible to experience in summary form the visual and historical richness of Boston's development prior to the mid-20th century. The expansion and contraction of the streets, the subtle sequences of spaces and the architectural variety provided almost limitless visual options.

Known by various names in the early days such as "the broad street" and "the market"street and, in 1708, King Street, State Street was the "main street" in the first years as the location of the meeting house, the market, early residences and access to the water. It was the social, religious, commercial and residential center. Although today it seems narrow, it began as the broad street and remained relatively wide through most of its history. At first lined with small, primitive detached dwellings, it soon compacted and by 1722 it appeared on Bonner's map as almost unbroken rows of two-and three-story buildings.

Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre, which took place just east of the Old State House on March 5, 1770, clearly shows the rows of abutting, mostly three-story colonial style buildings. According to Pemberton in 1794, "on each side this street are large handsome brick buildings, occupied as dwelling houses, publick houses, warehouses and auction offices. It is the general mart of business."[64]

The 1796 Boston Directory lists three banks in Boston, all on State Street. The August 3, 1799 Columbian Centinel reported: "The Union Bank House is undergoing such useful and ornamental repairs, as will add much to the beauty of State Street." These repairs were to the old Apthorp mansion and were designed by Charles Bulfinch. He also designed the brick Bank of the United States in 1798 (demolished in 1824) and the stone-faced Massachusetts Bank in 1838. Three of the insurance companies, side by side with the banks, were also by Bulfinch. An important addition to the street in 1842 was the Merchants Exchange, with its monumental three-story Greek Revival temple front of Quincy granite. It housed banks, offices, a hotel, the post office and an 80 by 58 foot hall.

Court Street, as an extension of State, shared some of its character but was differentiated by accommodating, first the prison and later the Court House. Before 1708 it was known as Prison Lane, then Queen Street and finally Court Street in 1788. The old Gaol stood on the site of the 1912 City Hall Annex. It was succeeded in the 18th century by a brick Court House with an octagonal cupola which, in turn, was replaced by a second Court House, this in granite with a Doric portico, in 1833-36, set in newly laid out Court Square.

Each of the several blocks and spaces of Tremont Street and its extensions had its own identity and rich background, but all were linked in a fascinating visual progression. From Park to Beacon/School Streets it was Common Street in the 18th century, passing the 1729 Grainery on one corner of the 1660 Granary Burying Ground, opposite well spaced houses. The Park Street Church, designed by Peter Banner, appeared in 1809, and by 1814 there were still detached but more compact wood houses in addition to brick rows leading into Hamilton Place, Bumpstead Place (no longer extant) and Bromfield's Lane. In 1827 Isaiah Rogers designed the granite Greek temple-fronted Tremont Theater on the east side between Bromfield and School Streets. Acquired by the Baptists in 1843, it burned in 1852. Fire destroyed two succeeding temples in 1879 and 1893. The present eight-story, terra cotta and limestone Tremont Temple was designed by C.H. Blackall and George F. Newton and built in 1894.

One year after completing the Tremont Theater, Isaiah Rogers turned

his attention across to the Beacon Street corner where he designed the world's first luxury hotel, Tremont House. Built of Quincy granite, four stories high, it was completed in 1829 and survived until 1894, replaced by the present 11-story granite office building by Winslow and Wetherell.

Boston's 1631 Burying ground on the north east corner of Tremont and School Streets, was intruded upon by the first King's Chapel building in 1688 as an Anglican affront to the Puritan tradition. The small wood church was expanded in 1710 and replaced by the present Quincy granite structure with its sumptuous Georgian interior in 1748-54. It was designed by Peter Harrison as the first major public stone building in America.

By 1860 Tremont Street, from Park to Court, presented itself as solid block fronts of three-to five-story buildings interrupted only by the two burying grounds and cross streets. The 1846 Boston Museum, by Hammatt Billings and the 1859 Second Tremont Temple, both elaborate Renaissance Revival structures, stood out among the other simple store-fronted blocks.

North of Court, Tremont's extension, called Sudbury in 1722 and Court in 1814, became less sedate and more varied, the legendary Scollay Square, named for a narrow wedge of buildings in the center of the street. Originally of wood, they were partially replaced by William Scollay's four-story brick block in 1795. The island was removed in 1870 and eventually succeeded by a fanciful subway station in 1898.

Continuing northwest from Scollay Square, the street constricted and then expanded into Bowdoin Square, a much more elegant space. Although the square had existed as a fork in the road during the 17th century, it did not attain its status as a formal residential enclave until after being named in 1788 and Bulfinch had designed a series of mansion houses for its elite beginning in 1791.

It was appropriate that Bulfinch should be recalled to the area since he was born there in 1763 in the three-story ca 1740 gambrel house of his grandfather, Dr. Thomas Bulfinch. Among the houses he was responsible for were a three-story, 60-foot-square brick house for Joseph Coolidge in 1792, his own house a block away in Bulfinch Place in 1793, the near-by first Harrison Gray Otis house in 1795, a house in Bulfinch Street for Joseph Coolidge, Jr., also in 1795, the Kirk Boott house in 1804, and the Chelmsford granite Blake-Tuckerman double mansion at the head of the square in 1814-15.

Construction of Richard Bond's gothic Bowdoin Square Baptist Church in 1840 signaled a change in the area. In 1846 Kirk Boott's mansion house was enlarged and added to as the Revere House Hotel, designed by William Washburn. Also in 1846 a four-story, three-store granite front block was constructed by developer Gardner Chilson at the corner of Court and Bulfinch Streets. From the 1860s and on Bowdoin Square deteriorated as wealthy Bostonians migrated to the Back Bay, with the grand houses becoming boarding houses or succumbing to demolition. The Coolidge House Hotel appeared on the Bulfinch birthplace site next to the church in the early 1860s and both were replaced in 1930 when the present 11-story limestone Art Deco telephone building, by Densmore, Le Clear and Robbins, was constructed. The Revere House was demolished for a fire station in 1919. Bulfinch's own house, which had been converted to the Hotel Waterston, was razed for the Saltonstall Building in 1961. The square itself no longer exists in any form.

School Street has experienced an unusually rich history, particularly in the development of religious, civic and commercial institutions. Boston Latin, founded in 1635 as the first public school in the country, completed the first of its four buildings on its namesake street in 1645 on the rear portion of the King's Chapel site. Across the street, John Mico's 60-foot 2½-story brick mansion house of 1704, after passing through a series of owners, became the Hotel Boylston in 1829, and was replaced in 1856 by

Harvey D. Parker's new white marble hotel, designed by William Washburn. In 1860 an east wing followed the demolition of Horticultural Hall which was built in 1844 on the site of the fourth Latin School house. A French chateau was added to the Parker House complex on the corner of Tremont in 1883-84 and the whole rich amalgam was replaced by the present hotel, designed by Desmond and Lord, in 1927.

On May 4, 1810, the Selectmen announced that they were "ready to proceed upon the foundation of the new Court House,"[65] with Bulfinch, their Chairman, as architect. In 1840-41 the Court House was refitted as City Hall, the buildings fronting on School Street were removed and the area was made into a square. The present "Old" City Hall replaced the Bulfinch building in 1862-65, designed by Bryant and Gilman.

The first Huguenot Church was located at 20 School Street from 1716 to 1741. A Congregational Church was in residence there from 1748 to 1788 when it became the first Catholic Church until its demolition in 1803.

The first of Park Street's four distinct periods was rural, simply as a path across the Common to the Beacon in 1640. Its second phase, as a collection of public buildings devoted to poor, vagrants and criminals, began in 1662 with the construction of an Almshouse near the Beacon Street corner, which burned in 1682, but was replaced a few years later. In 1720 a new 30 by 50 foot Bridewell (House of Correction) joined the Almshouse and in 1738 a Work House was built next to the Bridewell. Jonathan Williams and others received a timber permit in 1729 to construct a grainery on the corner of Common Street. The long wood building went out of public use in 1795 and was replaced by the Park Street Church in 1809.

The sale of lots by the town in 1801 ushered in Park Street's third life which took the form of Bulfinch Row, a group of elegant townhouses mostly constructed in 1804. These became homes to such notable citizens as three members of the distinguished Warren family, General Joseph Warren's daughter, Elizabeth Welles, and leading surgeons Dr. John Warren and his son, Dr. John C. Warren. With the last resident departing in 1907, the street moved into its fourth and final phase of accommodating a mix of commercial and institutional uses in buildings dating from 1804 to 1971.

The lethargy of the 1930s and 1940s was shaken by the Master Highway Plan of 1948 and the Federal Housing Act of 1949, which brought the Central Artery and "urban renewal" to Boston in quick succession. Atlantic Avenue had given but a faint hint of the devastation that would result from a six-lane elevated expressway snaking through the heart of the city cutting off the North End and waterfront. Hundreds of buildings were destroyed or dismembered, a number of streets were eliminated while others were interrupted or forced to gyrate in awkward ways to lock into the new system. The Artery was an alien, perhaps from far off Los Angeles. With its northern and southern sections completed in 1954 and 1959, it stands as a monument to governmental insensitivity and ineptitude.

During the next decade the city was to receive the second of the one/two punches it did nothing to deserve. In September of 1960 Mayor John F. Collins announced "a $90 million development program for Boston,"[66] the most far reaching urban renewal scheme in the country. A number of areas were designated for the Federal largesse including the Government Center, the Central Business District and the Waterfront. Writing in 1967, BRA Director Edward J. Logue stated: "In truth it can be said that our major goal in 1960 was the making of a 'New Boston'."[67] The "new" was accurate, the "Boston" was not. Central Arteries at ground level replaced the rich and intricate network of Boston's streets in the Government Center project area. 29 streets, lanes and squares were totally eliminated, 11 additional

streets were erased in large part and the remaining five were widened. Four new streets were added without regard to previous patterns. Only 10 of the hundreds of buildings survived, with only the Ames Building and Sears Crescent of historic interest. What emerged was a series of super blocks without definition. The insensitivity of Logue was apparent in his reference to Scollay Square: "The nature of the old Scollay Square area was such that no other approach (than total demolition) was possible or feasible. The net result was an opportunity to eliminate a hopelessly inadequate system of narrow winding streets and to replace them with a few major boulevards in scale with the Government Center development and the estimated traffic volumes."[68]

Logue hired architect I.M. Pei to produce the Government Center master plan. According to the late respected historian, Walter Muir Whitehill, "I.M. Pei wished not only to preserve the significant historic buildings in the area, but to create spaces in which immense new ones might be placed in harmonious relationship with their older neighbors."[69] Pei obviously failed in both respects as did most of the architects hired to design the "immense new ones". Boston City Hall is the only major building of distinction to emerge in the Government Center plan, but its isolation in its vast plaza totally detaches it from its "older neighbors". Clearly the tight, compact spaces of what is left of the old Boston are more congenial to human activity than the wide open, amorphous and irrelevant expanses of the New Boston, occupied by lonesome giants.

While the urban renewal juggernaught continued through the White years, especially affecting the waterfront, the individual massive high-rise private development emerged as threatening to further destroy the city in an equally lethal way. Only the rehabilitation of Quincy Market, an effort not without flaws, suggested any sympathy for the historic city.

What has happened to Boston since 1950 has been radical surgery on its street network, the elimination of most of its intimate squares, a staggering reduction in the number of buildings with a corresponding increase in their individual size, and an accompanying proliferation of ill-defined, left-over open space.

In 1938, when the last insurance atlas was published, there were 149 streets, lanes and squares in the study area, while in 1986 there were 107. The number of buildings dropped from 1,742 to 522 during the same period. Only three buildings rose over 14 stories in 1938, today there are 21, of which 10 exceed 35 floors.

In separating the buildings which exist in 1986 by development periods, two burying grounds but no buildings survive from 1630-1705, nine buildings remain from 1706-1783, 32 from 1784-1822, 215 from 1823-1872, 40 from 1873-1888, 137 from 1889-1925, 29 from 1926-1947, 29 from 1948-1969, 31 from 1970-1986. In both 1938 and 1986 counts, individual units in a row are counted separately, i.e. North Market is 23 buildings. In 1938 there were 1,742 buildings built by or before 1938, in 1986 there are only about 460 that date from before 1938, for a net loss of 1,282 historic buildings. Looking at the study area (visually) with these statistics in mind mandates the conclusion that Boston cannot afford to lose any more buildings 50 or more years old, which still retain their integrity and/or play a role in completing a block. Therefore it is much easier to single out the few which are expendable than to list the hundreds which are not. Examples of the former would include 66 Chatham Street (an 1830s building minus its upper floors), 70 and 94 Tremont Street (for the same reason).

The Boston Landmarks Commission committed a fundamental error in judgement in evaluating the results of its 1980 survey of central Boston, by assigning numerical values to individual buildings rather than giving primary consideration to the ensemble or to the contribution these buildings make

to the street and, therefore, to the city. The BLC compounded its mistake by underrating many of the buildings, in some cases to the point of denying deserving examples consideration as landmarks. One particularly glaring example of not giving a building its due, is the low category 4 bestowed on the previously mentioned Phillips Building at 120 Tremont Street, a seminal building in the development of the late Renaissance Revival style.

Preservation in Boston has too long focussed on the handful of Freedom Trail-type buildings while ignoring the more subtle levels of significance which the vast majority of the city's historic structures possess. A cohesive and vital city is not composed of individual landmarks, but of streets lined with varieties of plain and fancy buildings that in combination produce an enriching visual experience. Therefore, preservation should control what goes up as much as what comes down. Rather than removing existing buildings, first consideration should be given to eliminating vacant and parking lots, which are the city's true blight. In 1986 there are 58 vacant parcels in 36 separated locations, most of them having been in this state for many years.

The structure of Boston's historic street pattern precludes extended vistas from most locations. The logical and natural vista is short and enclosed. One exception is the view of the Custom House Block on Long Wharf from India Place, which will be enhanced with the depression of the Central Artery. Most extended views within the city and toward the water are compromised by out-of-scale and/or undistinguished, relatively new construction. Some intimate vistas which should be preserved, include views into Liberty Square along Water Street in both directions, and from Oliver and Batterymarch Streets; also, along Milk Street from Oliver to India Street, along Broad Street from Milk to State and vice versa, the India Street panorama from Milk toward State, along Central Street from the Artery to McKinley Square. The view up State Street from the Artery to the Old State House is impressive but compromised by One Boston Place and the Exchange tower. Views of the Park Street Church steeple from Hamilton and Tremont Places are inspiring, and the vista of the east side of Tremont Street between Park and Court in both directions, is of visual interest.

In the future the city needs to reassert the primacy of horizontal over vertical density, which is the chief difference between the historic and the modern city.

Leslie Larson
January 8, 1987

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A HISTORY AND ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL BOSTON (draft)

The land which greeted the arrival of William Blaxton, the reclusive Anglican clergyman and scholar, in about 1623, was irregular but not rugged, in both plan and elevation. The Shawmut Peninsula's shoreline was interrupted by coves, inlets and marshes, while its topography was marked by a scattering of rounded hills the most prominent of which was later called Trimountain, a name descriptive of its three linked summits. In addition to mounds and marshes, the peninsula offered its early settlers fresh spring water. In fact, from the beginning water became Boston's most valuable natural resource: first its springs to sustain life and then its docks to support commerce.

Since Blaxton was not concerned with the latter, he established himself adjacent to an inland spring on the southern slope of Trimountain toward the western shore. John Winthrop, on the other hand, arriving via Charlestown (which lacked fresh water) late in the summer of 1630 accompanied by several ships laden with Puritans, also settled near a spring, but on the eastern shore with its natural coves and creeks, ideal for future wharving out.

The Shawmut Peninsula was by no means a Garden of Eden. While it had fresh water and a developable shoreline, many of its 783 acres were hilly or marshy, barren of trees and less than ideal for farming.

From its early days onward visitors to Boston have provided informative descriptions of its topographical, architectural and urban aspects. With records of the first period of its development being fragmentary, William Wood's observations in his "New Englands Prospect", published after his return to London in 1634, are particularly illuminating: "Their greatest wants be Wood, and Meadow-ground, which never were in that place; being constrayned to fetch their building-timber ... from the Islands ... It being a necke and bare of wood .... The place being too small to containe many (farms), and fittest for such as can Trade into England, for such commodities as the Countrey wants, being the chiefe place for shipping and merchandize..."[1] Thus from the beginning Boston was destined to be dependent on the sea for long-distance trade with England and for supplies of construction timber from the harbor islands.

While the forms, sizes and materials of the first shelters are largely conjectural, at least one timber-framed house is know to have been

constructed during that first autumn. In July of 1630, while still in Charlestown, Governor Winthrop "ordered his house to be cut and framed."[2] When within weeks the move to Boston was accomplished, "the frame of the Governon's house in preparation" was carried along.[3] It undoubtedly set the standard to which his fellow colonists aspired.

Certainly all of the first houses were of wood, probably with thatched roofs and at least some with mud walls. On March 16, 1631, the use of thatch and wooden chimneys was prohibited as the result of Boston's recurring nemesis, fire.[4] Mr. Keayne "Mud Wall house" is mentioned in the Town Records for April 29, 1639.

Land allocations began even before the move to Boston with the preferred waterfront sites going to the leading citizens. Urban planning and control of development began early. On August 4, 1636 it was ordered that "noe house at all be built in this towne neere unto any of the streets or laynes therein, but with the advise and consent of the overseers of the Townes occasions for the avoyding of disorderly building to the inconvenience of streets and laynes, and for the more conely and Commodious ordering of them..."[5] Conditional land grants and building permits and other restrictions were in force during the settlement's first decade. Density was restricted by an order of October 12, 1636, that "not above one dwelling house shalbe built upon any one lott without the consent of the Townes overseers."[6]

A typical grant of the period was one of 2/17/1637, "that Mr. Danyell Mawde, schoolmaster shall have a garden plott next unto Stephen Kingsley's house & plott upon like Condition of building thereon if neede bee"[7] and a building permit reading "granted to our Brother Valentine Hill be guild a fitting house and shoppe upon the house plott which he hath bought that was our brother Mr. William Aspinwall's, and to lett it to Francis Lysle, Barber."[8]

The General Court ordered a survey of the houses and lands in every settlement in the Colony on April 1, 1634, which gave rise in Boston to the Book of Possessions, compiled in about 1645, listing each of the 246 property owners with his estate and its boundaries. On the basis of this it has been possible to arrange a map showing the streets and lots in existence at that time.

There is no record that the first streets were ever formally laid out. In 1630, activity centered along what is now State Street, from Tremont Street to the water. It began as - and still is - the primary east-west

thoroughfare in Boston, with Washington Street soon thereafter becoming the principal north-south artery, as the only route out of town along the neck. It is likely that the handful of original streets began as footpaths connecting citizens' houses with the communal areas and the waterfront. By early 1636 the town began ordering streets and lanes of specified width to be laid out along designated routes,as "a streete way betweene Henry Lynn and Mr. Samuell Coles' ground, to runne up from the water syde to the next crosse streete 1 Rod and halfe broad," and "the streete way from the gates next James Everill's toward ye mylne is to runne streight along in an even lyne to John Pemberton's house, and to range betweene Thomas Marshalls house and Sergyant Savage's house, and to be within the streete betweene payle and payle on eyther syde 2 pole bredth."[9] The confirmation of what was to become North Street was recorded in 1643 as "a highway of two rods in breadth shall be preserved on the beach from Edward Bendall's cove toward John Gallop's Point."[10]

On FeBruary 9, 1649, the present Kilby Street was "ordered and layd out a hyghway of 12 foot between Capt. Hardings howse and Wm. Davis howse alonge strait to the Bridge, which the towne and Mr. Hill set up between them.."[11]

It is reasonably certain that Boston's early streets were established by human feet and minds and not by domestic animals trudging along well trod routes linking pasture with barn. The many references to farm animals in the early town records treat them as nuisances, with pigs particularly singled out for their wayward foraging in neighboring yards. In 1640 they were required to be "yocked" if unattended and in 1643 it was "ordered that all swine whatsoever that remaine in this necke of Boston, shall be kept in yards or howses so as that they may not goe abroade to trespasse on mens corne or gardens."[12]

The street pattern which evolved during the 17th century responded very well to the topography and the needs of the town. It is not surprising that the town fathers chose not to impose a grid on this undulating and irregular peninsula. First generation settlers came from towns in East Anglia and the southwestern counties of England which retained, as many do today, their late medieval plans, with streets characterized by warped and winding lengths and expanding and contracting widths. The medieval city took its irregular form from the vagaries of land allocation and from the interation of public and private space, the two being defined according to their degree of penetrability. Streets were as narrow as possible while allowing for

the transit of goods and passage of persons, widening occasionally for reasons of commerce. A portion of State Street was 113 feet wide for that purpose, permitting construction of the first Town House with its street-level market, in 1657-59. Streets, rather than squares or plazas, were the public spaces of the medieval city. Boston's several "squares" that evolved during the 17th and 18th centuries were simply the expanded junctions of two or more streets.

By 1654, when Capt. Edward Johnson of Woburn wrote his descriptive account, Boston had developed considerably, with some masonry buildings in evidence. According to Johnson, "The chiefe Edifice of this City-like Towne is crowded on the Seabanks, and wharfed out with great industry and cost, the buildings beautiful and large, some fairly set forth with Brick, Tile, Stone and Slate, and orderly placed with comley streets, whose continual inlargement presages some sumptuous City..."[13]

John Josselyn's account of his two voyages to Boston, published in England in 1675 echoes Johnson's impressions: "The houses are for the most part raised on the sea-banks... many of them standing on piles, close together on each sides of the streets as in London..." He also mentioned "Brick, Stone, Lime" as materials and that "Their streets are many and large, paved with pebble stone."[14]

The implication in these two accounts that masonry buildings abounded in Boston during the third quarter of the 17th century is probably considerably exagerated, with the truth being more akin to a French protestant refugee's statement in 1687 that "the Town is almost wholly built of wooded Houses; but since there have been some ravages by Fire, building of Wood is no longer allowed, so that at the present writing very handsome Houses of Brick are going up."[15]

Fire was the most persistant influence on the development of Boston from 1653, the date of the first "Great Fire" until 1872, when the last Great Fire raged. Not only have large sections of the central district been destroyed periodically, but the influence on building materials and techniques, as well as on street enlargement has been extensive. From March 16, 1631, the date of the first recorded fire which destroyed the houses of Thomas Sharp and Mr. Coburn, until that fateful day of November 9, 1872, when 776 buildings were levelled, there have been innumerable small fires, about two dozen major fires and 6 Great Fires, each destroying a hundred or more buildings. Most

of these occurred at least partially within the study area. The following 15 fires most seriously affected this part of the town:

January (or April) 14, 1653: destroyed houses of principal settlers along the west side of what is now Washington Street.

August 8, 1679: 80 houses, 70 warehouses and several vessels, near the Town Dock.

October 8 (or 23), 1683: houses, warehouses and vessels, near the Town Dock and drawbridge.

April 3, 1688: 14 houses near the drawbridge.

October 2, 1711: 100 buildings, including the Town House and the First Church.

November 14, 1759: 10 or 12 houses plus stores on lower Milk Street and Oliver's Dock.

March 20, 1760: 174 houses, 175 warehouses, shops and stores,, from State to Milk and Washington to Batterymarch.

January 13, 1761: Faneuil Hall gutted, shops on the Town Dock.

February 1767: 17 or more houses, south side of Mill Creek.

May 7, 1774 (or May 17, 1775): 30 warehouses and buildings, south side of the Town Dock.

May 1, 1799: 11 houses on Washington Street.

November 3, 1818: Exchange Coffee House.

April 7, 1825: 53 buildings on Central and Kilby Streets.

May 18, 1835: 40 buildings on Blackstone and Pond Streets.

November 9, 1872: 776 buildings from Summer to Oliver and from Washington to the waterfront, of which about 110 were in the study area.

On October 15, 1679, following the fire which originated at the Sign of the Three Mariners, near the Town Dock, the General Court enacted the following law: "The Court... Do therefore order & enact that henceforth no dwelling house in Boston shall be erected & set up except of stone or brick, & covered with slate or Tyle..."[16] The law, however, was delayed for three years due to the high cost of masonry, and eventually made effective in 1683.[17] This was but one of a number of largely unsuccessful attempts over the years by both local and provincial governments to limit the spread of fires through legislation. Not only was the cost of masonry construction substantially more than wood, but suitable foundations were often difficult to lay down since so much of the land was marshy.

The town settled on the issuance of building permits, often with conditions, as a means of controlling the continued proliferation of wooden buildings. This gave rise to the "Book of Timber Buildings", a compilation of permits granted between 1709 and 1729, setting such conditions as brick ends, slated roof, rough-cast, "Battlements or Railes", and maintaining suitable distances between buildings.

A permit was issued to John Kilby on October 25, 1708 for a timber addition to his dwelling house "Provided he make battlemts round the roof."[18] On June 29, 1710, Capt. Nathaniel Oliver was permitted "to Erect a Timber building or shed 50 foot Long, 22 wide & Six feet Stud...at the Lower End of Water Street in Boston, the sd building will Stand One hundred foot Distant, from any Dwelling house..."[19] John Lothrop was granted a permit on Mackrill Lane, June 14, 1711, "the Land there being Marsh of a great Depth where a Foundation for building with Brick cannot be made without an excessive charge."[2] On October 5, 1710, "The Ministers Church Wardens and Vestry of the Church of England in Boston received permission "to Erect with Timber on the Land greanted them by the Town, an Addition to the sd Church they promising to ruff Cast or Plaister the sd Building to Secure it from fire."[21]

Dr. Jeremy Belknap wrote in 1795; "The houses and warehouses near the town-dock, which were rebuilt after the great fire of 1679, were either constructed with brick, or plastered on the outside with a strong cement, intermixed with gravel and glass, and slated on top."[22] Rough cast, which had become popular in East Anglia in the 16th and early 17th centuries, and was therefore familiar to many of the early settlers, was a logical compromise between a wood and brick surface.

Two of the more notable 17th century buildings, the Triangular Warehouse and the Old Feather Store, were built near the Town Dock in 1680, immediately following the 1679 fire. The warehouse, apparently of Dutch influence, was triangular in shape, 2 stories in height with a tall hip roof and massive turrets at each corner. It was actually rebuilt after the fire in brick, following the form of the destroyed timber structure. The Old Feather Store was a multi-gabled , two-tenement, timber structure with a projecting second story and a rough cast exterior. It was of late medieval English style transplanted to 17th century urban New England. Both of these buildings were demolished during the 19th century in the name of progress: the warehouse during the mayoralty of Josiah Quincy Sr., to make way for the market development bearing his name, and the Feather Store in 1860, for the widening of Anne (now North) Street.[23]

The Deacon Henry Bridgman house built in 1670 on the corner of what are Milk and Congress Streets, gained noteriety when, in 1794, it was purchased by Jean Baptiste Gilbert Payplat and subsequently became Boston's first French restaurant, Julien's Restorator. It was demolished in 1824. A relatively modest house on Milk Street was built sometime before 1685 when it was sold to Josiah Franklin, whose son Benjamin was born there in 1706. It burned in 1810. Both of these houses were gabled with projecting upper stories.[24]

A rather more elegant and suburban situation surrounded the two-story Flemish-gabled brick mansion house which peter Sergeant constructed on a large, landscaped plot well back from what is now Washington Street in 1679. It was purchased in 1715 by the Province, a third story was added, and it was thereafter known as the Province House. It survived in some form until 1922.

The eastern shore of the original Shawmut Peninsula curved around Great Cove which, in turn, was dented by two smaller coves on either side of what is now State Street. Great Cove began to curve inward just north of present day Lewis Wharf, returning at the South Battery, just above the location of Rowes Wharf. The northernmost subsidiary cove (where Faneuil Hall now stands) was known as Bendall's Cove, then, by the 1640s as Bendall's Dock and eventually as the Town Dock. It had a creek-like neighbor to the north, an inlet later called Mill Creek. Its southern neighbor, a less defined area, was called Shelter Cove and was fed by two small creeks converging as Shelter Creek, and was surrounded by marsh.

The first suggestion of Bendall's Cove's destiny was a reference to the "Common landing place between the 2 Creekes" in the Town Records for July 1, 1634. On September 9, 1641, the Town granted to Valentine Hill and his associates "all the wast ground...from the Point of the Marish between Mr. William Tynge's Palle and John Lowe's howse there...to the uppermost Corner of Mr. Edward Tynge's Proprietie neare the key...and so round by Edward Bendall's to the Point afore mentioned,for so many yeares as the Charge they shall bestowe in Purchase of their neighbors their late warfinge, and in Building, making and repairing such wharfes, creekes or coves within this five yeares now next Coming..."[25] Upon fulfilling the agreement to wharve out the dock within five years they were given an 80-year lease on the property.[26] "It is ordered & agreed upon the pvseal of the accounts of Mr. Hill & Edward Bendall about the Cove or docke, in their charges wch they layed out in the fyve years allowed them by the towne.... makes theire number of

yeares for them to possesse to be foure scoure from the yeare 1646."[26]

In succeeding years they sold off much of their land around the dock including a parcel of 30 feet to Peter Oliver in 1651, on condition that Oliver make up the head sill of the wharf and construct a 20-by-40-foot warehouse within three weeks which would then be divided ½ for Oliver and ½ for Bendall and Hill. Thus Bendall's Dock - called Town Dock after 1673 - became the first topographical alteration of the Shawmut Peninsula.

Eight years after the aforementioned warehouse's completion, James Johnson, Peter Oliver and Amos Richardson acquired "certain parcels of Marish Land" from John Leverett, then residing in London, "on the South side of sd. Creeke made through the whole Marish being from the sd. Creeke about one quarter of an Acre..."[27] This abutted land which Oliver was then renting from the town. Two adjacent parcels were conveyed by Johnson to Oliver on January 31, 1660.[28] On June 20, 1679, Richard Waldren signed the following oath: "These may Certify...That in the years 1659 and 1660 myself did Digg the part of the Dock called Mr. Peter Olivers Dock... having had built a Warehouse & part of a Wharfe next the Sea..."[29]

Development of the area surrounding Oliver's Dock was dominated by Peter Oliver and his descendents from the time of its wharving out in 1659 until well into the 18th century. While Peter Oliver had sold many of the warehouses he had built prior to his death in 1670, there remained in his estate 16 parcels of land with buildings, plus other warehouses and tenements, which were divided in 1685 among his five surviving children, Nathaniel, James, Daniel, Sara Noyes and Mary, the wife of Nathaniel Williams. All of these properties were strung out along what are now Water, Kilby, Milk and Oliver Streets.[30] This and the succeeding two generations of Olivers were active in the acquisition and development of property in the vicinity of Oliver's Dock.

From the times of their wharving out in 1641 and 1659, respectively, Bendall's Dock and Oliver's Dock became important reference points and loci for development until the end of the 18th century. Throughout this extended period both areas supported a mix of uses: residential, waterfront related, craft and commercial. Most of the non-residential buildings were wood warehouses, of one or two stories, but there were salthouses, bakehouses, brewhouses and cooper's shops as well. Both of these docks spawned numerous individual wharves and docks strung out along the rim of Great Cove which, in time, replaced many of the residential estates overlooking the water.

On the 29th of March, 1643, permission was granted to "John Winthrop, Esq. Governor, Valentine Hill, merchant, Richard Fayrebankes, Robert Turner and James Davis for "Digging of a creek for the Harbour of Boats in the marish neare William Hudson, senior, his howse,"[31] which was located at what is now the southeast corner of Kilby and State Streets. Four years later Benjamin Ward was given "libertye to wharf afore his on propretye Beniamin Ward hath bought of the town the eight part of the marish that is next to him."[32] It was here that Ward began what became, under his direction and that of several generations of Hallowells, the leading shipyard in Boston, surviving until about 1800.

One of the largest construction projects ever attempted in Boston was undertaken on the waterfront in 1673, following a September 5th affirmative vote of the town regarding "erectinge of a wall or wharfe upon the flatts before the towne from the sconce to Capt. Samuell Skarlets wharfe...for the securitie of the towne."[33] The "Barricado", as it was called, was a fortified breakwater 2,200 feet long, 15 feet high and 20 feet wide at the top, constructed by 41 volunteer "undertakers" who received grants of marsh land in exchange for their labors.

According to geographers Cohen and Lewis, after its founding in 1630, "The town quickly emerged as the premier entrepot in New England," outfitting and operating "much of the complex Atlantic commerce of the 17th and 18th centuries...its chief function was to buy, sell, and process other people's goods."[34] This conclusion is born out by such early descriptions and William Wood's of 1634, previously quoted, and Capt. Edward Johnson's of 1654, "This Town is the very Mart of the Land, French Portugalls and Dutch, come hither for Traffique."[35]

Since the inner part of Great Cove was shallow and reduced to mud flats at low tide, the larger ships were forced to anchor some distance from shore. It was, therefore, ordered in 1637 that "Edward Bendall shall keepe a sufficient ferry boate to carry to Noddles Island and to the ships ryding before the towne."[36]

Mill Cove, a northern indentation similar to Great Cove, was granted in 1643 to Henry Symons, George Burden, John Buttons, John Hill, on condition that they build one or more corn mills. They were also permitted "to dig one or more trenches" in the marsh between the two coves. Their agreement with the town stated that "if they shall carry their millstreame through the Marish on the northeast end of goodman Lowe's howse, they have sixty foot in breadth

throughout the sayd marish granted unto them."[37] This became Mill Creek, which was eventually filled in as Blackstone Street by 1831.[38]

By the end of the 17th century Boston's population had risen to about 6,700. At a meeting of the "Free-holders and other Inhabitants of the Town of Boston" on September 22, 1701, the Selectmen were ordered "to Assign & Fix Names, unto the several Streets and Lanes within this Town," the "several" being virtually all of the streets,which were theretofore nameless. It took until May 3, 1708 for this to be accomplished, with the total adding up to 110, 64 of which were at least partially within the study area. A number of these streets, of course, no longer survive. Of those that exist today in some form, only the following 18 retain close to their original names: Batterymarch, Beacon, Cambridge, Crab, Cross, Fleet, Marsh, Marshall's, Merchants Row, Milk, Oliver, Salem, Salt, School, Spring, Tremont, Union, Water.

John Bonner's map of 1722, the earliest surviving map of Boston, shows 73 streets and rudiments of streets later extended, within the study area, but names only 41 of these. He also lists total houses in Boston at "near" 3,000, of which 1,800 are listed as of brick and the rest timber. While he does not distinguish between residential and non-residential buildings (other than identifying prominent public buildings) on the map, he shows a total of 960 within the study area. Of these, 153 are detached and 807 are in groups or rows of two or more. The Bonner maps were reissued with revisions in 1733, 1743 and 1769. The 1769 map shows 8 additional streets, but no major topographical changes.

The late medieval character of the town is quite apparent in Bonner's layout of streets and cartoons of the buildings. The older part around the Town Dock and King (State) Street contains many small, irregular blocks edged by long rows of 1, 2 and 3-story buildings along expanding and contracting lanes. Many of the blocks have the character of irregular quadrangles, with rows of buildings enclosing relatively open space. Beyond Cornhill (Washington), Water and Hanover Streets, the blocks enlarge and the density decreases. In the early years most of the open land was used for pasture. The larger blocks on Bonner's map suggest vestiges of these pastures behind the houses.

Early in October, 1711, The Boston News-Letter reported that "on Tuesday the second of October...a Fire broke out in an old Tenement within a back yard in Cornhill, near to the First Meeting-House...the Flames took hold of the Neighbouring Houses , which were high and contiguous in that part...

made its progress throughout Cornhill on both sides of the Street and on both sides of the upper parts of King and Queen (Court) street; the Town House and the Meeting-House, with many fair Buildings were Consumed..."[39] In all, 100 buildings were destroyed in the heart of town.

The First Church was originally built in 1632 on the present site of the Second Brazer Building, bounded by State, Devonshire and Quaker Lane. By 1639 it had deteriorated and in 1640 a new meeting house was constructed in Cornhill Square, facing Cornhill, a site presently occupied by the One Boston Place tower. Both structures were wood with the second consumed by the 1711 fire. In 1713 a new 3-story brick meeting house had been completed, surviving until replaced by Joy's Building in 1808.

Robert Keayne, a merchant tailor, left, on his death in 1656, a bequest that made possible construction of the first Town House. In March 1657 a committee was chosen "to consider the modell of the towne house to be built." It was a sturdy wooden affair with the meeting rooms and library set up on stout posts providing space at street level for the market which was already in that location. After the fire of 1711, the town replaced it with a brick structure to house both town and provincial governments, plus courts and a merchant's exchange. This building in turn burned on December 9, 1747, but the walls survived as they do today as the Old State House.

The Old South Meeting House, on the corner of Milk and Washington Streets, was constructed by Joshua Blanchard in 1729, replacing the 1669 Third Church, which had supplanted the house of Governor Winthrop 20 years after his death in 1649.

Only three 18th century houses survive in the study area, all of them brick. The Old Corner Bookstore, at the corner of Washington and School Streets, was built immediately after the 1711 fire by Thomas Crease, an apothecary. The other two are located in the Blackstone Block: the Capen House on Union Street, dating from about 1714, an oyster house since 1826, and the Ebenezer Hancock House on Marshall Street, built by his Uncle, Thomas Hancock, about 1760.

The process of widening and smoothing the edges of Boston's crooked and narrow streets as a deterant to the spread of fire and to accommodate movement of the increased volume of people and products, gained its impetus in the late 17th century by an act of the General Court of June 8, 1692, concerning compensation for land takings which mentioned "where any desolation has happened to regulate and enlarge other narrow and Crooked Lanes or Passages."

The 18th century saw an increasing number of street widenings. Pudding Lane (Devonshire Street) was widened to 14 feet in 1712,[40] the width of Milk Street was increased to 18 feet, 21 feet 7 inches and 22 feet 7 inches at various stretches from Nathaniel Williams to Mr. Halwels shop,[41] part of Anne Street was enlarged in 1722[42] and 4'-11" of William Alden's land was taken in 1731 for the widening of Cambridge Street.

Not only were Boston's early streets crooked and warped, but their edges in many cases were extremely irregular due to the jutting out of buildings. It was not uncommon for the town to grant individual property owners permission to intrude their houses and barns into the rights of way during the 17th century. On October 2, 1644, Deacon Eliot was granted liberty "to sett out his barne six or eight foot into the street..."[43] and eight years later Sarjt. Robert Turner was "allowed to have his new house jet out farther into the street than his old house."[44] While this made for a picturesque town with varied and surprising vistas, the town officials during the 18th century no doubt looked on streets more in terms of the flow of traffic than as fascinating gathering places.

A number of new streets came into being during the 1700s and existing streets were extended. Some of the new streets subdivided larger blocks which still contained pasture land. On May 29, 1711 the Selectmen agreed "to continue Trea-mount Street upon the Hill..., the Sd way at the corner of Mr Belknaps old House nearest Capt. Southacks Land to be eighteen feet wide and to continue...upon a Northerly line, until it come even...with the North corner of sd Stanifords Land..."[45]

As commerce increased following the wharving out of Bendall's and Oliver's Docks in the mid-17th century, small private wharves multiplied in number and size along the shore of Great Cove. By the early 18th century the lack of a deep water wharf to provide anchorage for larger sailing ships became critical. On October 20, 1708 the General Court appointed a committee to deal not only with the deteriorating Barricado, but to provide a plan for general waterfront improvements. The November 5, 1709 report recommended, among other things, that "Liberty be Granted for King Street to be Continued in a Straight line from the Circular Line (a previously established inviolate pierhead limit at about the present location of the Board of Trade Building, paralleling the shore line of Great Cove) to Low water-Mark forty five foot in width."[46] At a town meeting the following month, Oliver Noyes, James Barnes, Daniel Oliver, John George, John Gerrish and Anthony Stoddard,

Gentlemen, presented a proposal "for the wharfing and carrying out of King Street, Further Easterly...will at our own Cost and Charge Erect and build a Wharffe..." On May 17, 1710 an indenture between the Selectmen and the Proprietors was signed.[47]

The Book of Timber Buildings' entry for March 1, 1710 recorded permission granted to Oliver Noyes and company to "Erect a Range of Buildings of timber for Warehouses...on the North side of sd Range of Wharffe..." By 1715 the last 600-foot section of wharf was in place bringing its total length to 1,586 feet, its width being 54 feet. A divisional agreement among the proprietors dated March 7, 1717 apportioned the 24 lots "together with the Structures Edifices and buildings on the said Several Lotts and Divisions now standing."[48]

Long Wharf, or Boston Pier as it was also called, underwent many changes and additions over its history. On May 10, 1763 the Proprietors petitioned for permission to widen the north side 20 feet and erect an addition to each store. In 1794 it was described as having "a long range of handsome warehouses...built of wood."[49] In 1804 Selectmens Minutes referred to the "new Brick Stores at the head of Long Wharf,"[50] and a plan dated March 18, 1815 shows 10 blocks of stores in line plus one across the deep water end.[51] A July 8, 1831 plan has 8 ranges of stores, 5 of brick, one of wood, two unidentified as to material.[52] Another plan shows "a parcel of land with the ten stores to be built thereon before said thirtieth Day of September... Eighteen hundred and fifty five..."[53] This latter group still stands on Long Wharf as the granite Custom House Block, designed by Isaiah Rogers. The adjacent brick row housing the Chart House Restaurant probably dates from the early 19th century.

23 wharves of various sizes, in addition to Long Wharf, appear on Bonner's 1722 map in Great Cove, most well populated with warehouses, indicating considerable trade. The largest of these was Clark's Wharf which eventually joined Lewis Wharf as its northern edge. The updated Bonner map for 1769 shows the same, renamed Hancock's Wharf. It also shows Rowes Wharf, located immediately south of the Battery, for the first time. Col. Jacob Wendell maintained the wharf for some time before conveying it to John Row in 1764.

As early as 1677 the waterfront had a dry dock[54] and in 1714 the first schooners were built in Boston.[55] In 1748 there were 430 entries of ships from foreign ports, 725 by 1795 and 938 in 1806.[56] Writing in 1794 ~~Pendelton~~ Pemberton reported that "the harbour of Boston is...crowded with vessels...

It is reckoned that not less than four hundred and fifty...are now in this Port."[57] The 1796 Boston Directory lists about 80 wharves in the town.

As the waterfront expanded in the early 18th century, Bendall's Dock became less and less a factor in commerce. Land became more valuable than water and hence pressure to fill the dock increased. On July 1, 1728 the town voted certain improvements in the dock area including ordering "the whole South part of the Dock to be filled up, and a Street of Suitable bredth to be layed out...and a Rainge of Low Shops to be Erected..."[58] This was timely, for in 1733 the "vacant place at or near the Town Dock be on of the Places" for a market.[59]

A 1738 plan shows the dock being rather narrow with "eight small shops to Billings corner on the south side, which had been filled, and "2 stores belong to Mr. Palmer" in "Market Place".

Two years later Peter Faneuil, a wealth merchant of French Huguenot extraction, offered "to Erect and Build a noble and compleat Structure of Edifice" for a market.[60] The town, however, nearly rejected Faneuil's generosity , when the vote to accept, taken at its meeting on July 2, 1740, passed by the narrow margin of 367 to 360. On September 2nd, "Mr. Joshua Blanchard presenting a Plan, from Peter Faneuil, Esq. of a House for a market, to be built on Dock Square...Desiring the Select men would lay out the Ground in Order to begin the Foundation; The Select men accordingly met, went on the place...Mark'd and Stak'd out a Piece of Ground for that use, measuring in length from the lower or Easterly end fronting the Ware houses in Merchants Row, One hundred feet, and in Breadth Forty feet, which leaves a Passage Way of thirty feet Wide Between the Town's Shops and the Market House to be built."[61]

On August 20, 1742, "Mr. Samuel Ruggles who was Employed in Building the Market house...Waited on the Select men by order of Peter Faneuil Esq & delivered them the Key of said House which they accordingly received."[62]

According to a manuscript written by Charles Bulfinch at the time of his enlargement of the Hall in 1806, the original building was "completed in a most substantial and elegant manner in September, 1742, after a design of Mr. Smibert." Mr. Smibert was, no doubt, the prominent Scottish-born portrait painter who was to complete a full length portrait of the doner a few months before Faneuil's death in 1743.

Fire struck Faneuil Hall and neighboring shops on January 13, 1761, leaving only the brick walls standing. The town voted to repair the building

on March 23rd, "to have the Roof Slated (the original was probably wood shingles the Window Frames of Stone and the Ornaments with as little Wooden work as possible."[63]

The building which stands today is an enlargement of the Smibert structure authorized on May 23, 1805, with Bulfinch as architect. The same design elements were kept by Bulfinch, but the building was considerably enlarged, from 2 stories to 3 and from 3 bays in width to 7, keeping the length at 9 bays.

Following completion of the original Faneuil Hall in 1742 the town began nibbling away at what remained of the dock, first by voting to fill up the "head of said Dock" in 1747[64] and finally completing the job in 1784.[65]

Ten months prior to the Faneuil Hall fire, Boston's worst confligration up to that time swept eastward from Cornhill across Oliver's Dock to the water. As reported in The Boston News-Letter dated March 20, 1760, the day of the fire, "A most terrible fire happened in the Town supposed to be greater than any that has been known in the American Colonies...began 11 AM...at the Boston-Head in Cornhill...raged violently towards east All stores fronting Pudding + every dwelling house from thence...it burnt every house, shop, store, out house etc to Oliver's Dock took bldgs fronting on lower part of King St, destroyed the houses from the corner opp. the Bunch of Grapes Tavern to the warehouse of Messr's Box & Aultin...on S.E. part fire extended from Mr. Torrey's the Baker, in Water St. froceeded to Mr. Hall's Working House & thence to Milk St. & consumed every house from the next to Mr. Calfe's... to the bottom of the Street...also every house, warehouse, shop & store from Oliver's Dock along Mr. Hallowells Shipyard, Mr. Hallowells Dwelling House, the Sconce at So. Battery, all bldgs shops, stores on Col. Wendells (later Rowes) Wharf...from Pudding Lane (Devonshire) to the water not a building to be seen except...did not extend to north side of King St." In all, 174 houses plus 175 warehouses, shops etc,, for a total of 349 buildings, were destroyed.

Following the fire the Great and General Court appointed a committee to facilitate rebuilding of the burned area. Meeting on April 1, 1760, the committee approved various applications,typical of which was Mr. David Spears: "Liberty is granted him to rebuild his Dwelling house in Leveretts Lane (Congress Street). provided he build the same with Stone or Brick and cover with Slate or Tile. .." Similarly Benjamin Hallowell, Esq. was permitted to rebuild his house according to the same conditions. At its April 4th

meeting the committee "agreed that it is necessary that Pudding Lane be widened opposite to Mr. Phillip's Brick wall" and "that Leveretts Lane should be widened and...continued...to Milk Street;" also "that Mackrel Lane (Kilby Street) should be made Wider and...c ontinued near upon a Strait line to Milk Street...so as to open Oliver Street leading up to Fort Hill..." Other streets were enlarged as well, including Water Street which was "enlarged and widened 14' 10"."[66]

The General Court passed, on June 20, 1761, yet another act aimed at controling construction with wood. Chapter 9: "Whereas great desolation hath been lately made by fire, in the town of Boston, which hath been principally occasioned by the narowness of the streets, and the houses being built with wood and covered with shingles.." Sec. 7:"that no house or other building whatsoever, of more than seven feet in height, shall be erected in Boston, otherwise than of stone or brick and covered with slate or tiles..." Sec. 9: "that it shall be and may be lawful...to build of wood, any warehouse, shop or workhouse, upon any wharff where...no solid foundation can be had without great expense, on condition that the side...be covered with plaister or slate, and the roof covered with slate or tiles..."

The rise in wealth of the merchant traders of Boston during the 18th century spawned a number of "mansion houses" particularly on Beacon Street, on the eastern slope of Cotton Hill, Marlborough (Washington) Street, Milk Street and, toward the end of the century, in Bowdoin Square. These houses were often surrounded by outbuildings and gardens. While there were occasional Mansion houses in the 17th century, such as one [redacted] on the site of 1 Liberty Square which Judith Hull inherited from her husband, John Hull, Esquire, on March 12, 1683,[67] it took some time for the numbers of wealthy land owners to increase to the point where their estates became a significant component in the townscape.

Not too long after 1640, when School and Beacon Streets were ordered laid out "from Mr. Atherton Haulghes to the Centry Hill"[68] the eastern and southeastern slope of Beacon Hill became a highly desirable residential area due at least in part to its commanding view of the town and harbor. This was the eastern peak of Trimountain called Cotton Hill because the Rev. John Cotton (1584-1652) had a house on 1½ acres of its lower slope. Sir Henry Vane lived with Cotton during his term as governor in 1636-37. Governors John Endicott and Richard Bellingham both lived on the slope as well. Humphrey Davy acquired Bellingham's property in 1663[69], which measured 140' on Tremont and 325' deep. In 1710 Andrew Faneuil purchased the estate

with "a stone dwelling-house" from Davy's two sons. Andrew Faneuil built a 3-story mansion house set well back from Tremont Street, which his nephew Peter inherited in 1738. Beside it above Court Street stood another 3-story mansion house constructed by William Vassall in 1758, conveyed to Gardiner Greene in 1803. This estate was noted for its terraces, gardens and peacocks.[70]

James Penn owned a mansion house at the corner of Tremont and Beacon in 1658. Developer and merchant David Hinckley acquired the abutting property at the corner of Beacon and a "new street called Somerset street" on January 19, 1810, which had on it "the old stone house" shown on a plan as an L-shaped "Mansion house" 30 by 46½ feet with a detached barn on the Somerset corner.[71] Hinckley proceeded to demolish the complex and build his own 3-story, granite double mansion house on the site of the barn. It was sold to the Somerset Club in 1852 and became the Congregational House in 1873.

The block on the north side of Beacon between Bowdoin and Somerset Streets was taken up by 3 mansion houses occupied in the mid to late 18th century by James Bowdoin, who purchased the corner lot on his namesake street from his father-in-law, John Erving, in 1756; Edward Bromfield Jr., who acquired the middle lot from Samuel Sewall in 1742 (his wife sold it to William Phillips in 1763, after his death) and David Sears, Sr., who also acquired his lot in 1742. The 3-story Bromfield mansion house had been built by 1722 (on Bonner's map) and was set back from the street up 3 steep flights of steps. It was demolished in 1845 during the cutting down of the hill for Ashburton Place.

An important amenity introduced into Boston just before the Revolution was the town's first street lights. In 1773 the committee determined that "white Globe lights will answer better than Square ones."[72] It was reported that John Boylston had purchased the oil lamps in London "very cheap" and by March 30, 1774, 310 had been erected.[73] Gas lights were first exhibited on November 26, 1815, pipes were laid beginning in 1826 and the first lamp illumiated in Dock Square in 1829. There were 20 such lamps in 1832 and by 1880 there were 10,139 gas lights, 2,276 oil lamps, and one electric light, that on display in Scollay Square.[74]

The two decades or so surrounding the Revolutionary War represented a period of developmental stagnation. Thousands of residents left town, trade was drastically restricted and even fires seemed less destructive. In his first letter from Boston in 1781, the Count de Rochambeau suggested the town's condition in stating that Boston "did not seem to us a modern

settlement so much as an ancient city." He did go on to describe the town in a positive way, however: "The principal street of the town...is ornamented with elegant buildings, for the most part two or three stories high... They are built of brick, and wood...well provided with windows and doors...generally painted a pale white color..."[75]

Writing in 1794, Thomas Pemberton observed that "many large spots of land still remain vacant. The houses are built chiefly of pine and oak, in general about three stories high. There are however many large handsome brick houses... In Cornhill,...the houses are all built of brick, the front of the lower floors generally occupied as shops for the sale of dry goods etc... irregularity of their height, no two adjoining houses being equal in height... There are also in the town four stone dwelling houses...all of them ancient buildings."[76] He also noted that most houses had gardens.

The 1796 Boston Directory sets the number of houses in Boston at 2,376 with 97 streets, 36 lands, 26 alleys and 18 courts, with most of them being "irregular and not very convenient, State Street, Common Street and a few others are exceptions."

For the United States Direct Tax of 1798, an inventory and assessment of all properties in the town was taken. Listed were owner, occupant, location, assessed value, use and, in many cases, materials, number of stories and, for houses, area. Thus it is possible to chart patterns of use, degrees of density, concentrations of brick or wood buildings. Within the study area of 75 streets, lanes, wharves, etc., there were about 370 commercial buildings and 744 dwellings for a total of about 1,114, plus 145 outbuildings (barns, stables, separate kitchens, woodhouses). 11 streets were exclusively commercial, 26 residential and 38 mixed. The 52 buildings on Cornhill, most of which contained stores, were classed as residential, making the mix of uses even more pervasive. Of those buildings where the stories were listed, 13 were one-story, 327 were 2-story, 400 were 3-story. Where materials were listed, 489 were wood, 133 wood and brick, 356 brick, plus 3 part stone and 3 part rough cast.

Prior to the post-Revolution Federal period, architects were almost unknown in Boston. Buildings were designed by those who constructed them, housewrights, carpenters and masons, either from precedent and practicality or from pattern books. Three exceptions stand out from the mid to late provincial era: John Smibert, portrait painter, who designed Faneuil Hall in 1740; Peter Harrison, a gentleman architect from Newport, who supplied ~~the plans for King's Cha~~

the plans for King's Chapel in 1748, and Thomas Dawes, a builder turned architect, who was responsible for the design of the Brattle Square Church in 1772, among other buildings.

The year 1787 marked the beginning of a new era, both in architectural design and in urban planning. This was the year that Charles Bulfinch returned to Boston from a two-year stay in England and Europe, fresh with new design ideas promoted by Robert Adam and the British neo-classicists. He returned to a colonial town architecturally, with many of its buildings and their arrangement still exhibiting a medieval character. It was a town predominently of wood when he arrived, and a city of brick when he departed for Washington 30 years later. The changes which Bulfinch was able to plan and promulgate, by virtue of his skill and sensibility as a gentleman architect and his official positions as town architect, chairman of the Board of Selectmen for 19 years, and even as Chief of Police, were the most far reaching in Boston's history prior to the 1960s.

Bulfinch introduced a new standard of elegance in Boston architecture in his mansion houses, and in this public and institutional buildings, while at another level reordering vernacular architecture and town planning in a pragmatic and almost simplistic fashion. Whereas colonial rows of buildings were often irregular in height and frontage, Bulfinch introduced the smooth-faced row of identical buildings, simply but elegantly detailed in such instances as Colonnade Row (1811) on Tremont Street and "Bulfinch Row" (1804) on Park Street, and almost without detail in Broad and India Street warehouses. The row house and the range of shops or warehouses became the pattern of development through the first half of the 19th century.

It was Bulfinch's intention, as well as that of his clients, a new breed of old family merchant developers, to bring a more obvious order to the seemingly chaotic town. In laying out streets on newly reclaimed or about to be reclaimed land, shown on his plans for the Broad Street Association in 1805 and 1808, and for the Mill Pond in 1808, he introduced the grid to Boston, carefully grafting it onto the old system of streets.

A newly laid out grid pattern of streets on the southern part of the neck appears on Hales' map of 1814. This pattern was extended throughout the South End in succeeding years and laid out in the Back Bay from 1859 and on.

On January 31, 1803 the town approved yet another masonry building law, "That all beuildings exceeding ten feet in hight shall be built wholly of

brick or stone..."[77] This time enforcement was less of a problem with Bulfinch as both Chairman of the Selectment and Chief of Police. Ironically, in 1821, four years after Bulfinch had left town, the town voted to repeal the law and permit wooden dwelling houses, subject to certain conditions.

Streets continued to be enlarged and extended during these decades and amenities were added, such as sidewalks. In 1793 the Selectmen voted to pave Cambridge Street near Bowdoin Square "provided the side Walks be paved with Brick or flat Stones similar to Union Street."[78] Merchant's Lane and the west entrance into Bowdoin Square were widened in 1805,[79] Middlecott Street was extended to Beacon and renamed Bowdoin Street in 1807,[80] and the Selectmen agreed to take down part of Mr. White's store to widen State Street in 1809.[81]

The repositioning of buildings for a more regular streetscape continued as well, even after Bulfinch's departure. Mr Hubbard was given permission on July 1, 1818, to bring his building (being erected) in line with the others on Common Street, since "it would add to the beauty of the street if the buildings were on a line with each other."[82] That same day the Board decided to "purchase a part of a building belonging to Mr. Motley, that projected into Elm Street."[83] In 1810 Exchange Lane was widened 12 feet on the west side according to a "plan of Charles Bulfinch."[84]

China trade began for Boston in 1787 (coincidentally the year of Bulfinch's return from abroad) with the far east voyage of the ship Columbia. It therefore seems appropriate that Bulfinch should be associated with a series of interrelated projects that would transform the southern arc of Boston's waterfront from a rundown and haphazard collection of warehouses, shanties and wharves into a well ordered community of commerce consisting of broad streets lined by blocks of handsome brick warehouses extending out on two spacious piers.

It was the Broad Street Association, incorporated in 1805 in an effort to reestablish Boston as a leading port, which became the principal force in the redevelopment of the waterfront and warehouse district south of Long Wharf. While the development of the Broad Street/India Street warehouse area, plus India and Central wharves, was implemented by several corporations, it was Harrison Gray Otis, Francis Cabot Lowell, James Lloyd, Jr., and Uriah Cotting, merchants, and partners in the Broad Street Association, who were the prime movers in all cases, with Bulfinch as planner.

The initial scheme was to provide a uniform shoreline by filling in around old wharves and flats, construction of a single spacious wharf and laying out of new streets. Batterymarch Street was widened, and extended

and renamed in part Broad Street. Fill was added and India Street, named in 1804, was laid out along the new shore line. The two were connected with several narrower cross streets.

On March 8, 1803, a contract was signed between John Newcomb and William Baxter of Quincy and Cotting, Lowell and Henry Jackson for stone and construction of a wharf or sea wall. The following May 24, Rev. William Bently noted while visiting Boston from Salem, "the new wharf near Battery March is begun." The earliest sales agreement among the Lowell papers regarding India Wharf, dated June 22, 1803, stated that Lowell, Cotting and Jackson "are building or about to build ten brick stores on or near Battery March...extending from said street toward the sea...according to a plan drawn by Charles Bulfinch, Esq." They were to be brick, 4 stories "ornamented with a row of Marble ribbon."[85] Contracts for the main building, "a block of thirty four stores", were signed in November 1804 and April 1805. On May 18, 1805 Otis, Cotting, Lowell and Lloyd conveyed to Robert G. Shaw, merchant, "a certain Brick store with the land under the same situated on India Wharf...being store number one on said wharf, now in the occupation of William Parkman."[86] The central block was completed in 1806.

On March 28, 1805 the four Broad Street partners, plus seveal others, conveyed to the Broad Street Association about 11 parcels south of State Street. The deed refers to "a new street intended to be laid out...from State Street to Battery march street" which became Broad Street.[87] Two plans by Bulfinch, one dated September 5, 1805, show 7 blocks of parcels along Broad, India, Central and Milk Streets "intended for sale by the Broad Street Association."[88] Another plan, dated April 8, 1808, showing 6 blocks between Broad and India Streets, accompanied a division of properties indenture among Otis, Lowell, Cotting and Lloyd with restrictions and conditions applying to buildings to be built on the lots.[89]

The 1807 Boston Directory described the area as follows: "Here are erected about 60 brick stores, 40 of them 5 stories high... These streets, wharf and buildings...form, together, the most elegant and commodious seat for mercantile business in the U.S."[90] In 1810 the Custom House was relocated from the corner of Flag Alley and State Street to a new building in Custom House Street, one of the connecting streets between Broad and India, where it remained until the present Custom House was completed in 1847. It was designed by Uriah Cotting and built by the Broad Street Association.[91]

On April 19, 1815 the Broad Street quartet plus Ebenezer Francis, David Hinckley and Israel Thorndike conveyed the "whole estate" to the Central Wharf and Wet Dock Corporation bounded "westerly on a line formed by the brick stores on the west side of India Street Northerly by the land wharf and Dock of the Proprietors of Boston Pier or Long Wharf Easterly by the Salt water and Southerly by the land wharf andDock of the Proprietors of India Wharf."[92] Writing in 1817, Shbael Bell, Senior Warden of Christ Church observed: "In the course of the last year, Central Wharf, and the extensive range of Stores which it supports was begun and compleated...The number of stores are fifty four, and the length of the tier nearly thirteen hundred feet of four Stories.... The wharf is already lined with vessels and crowded with business."[93] In 1841 Central Wharf was the largest continuous block of warehouses in the U.S. It served the Mediterranean trade and berthed famous clipper ships.[94] Both India and Central wharves survived intact until they were cut through for Atlantic Avenue in 1868.

Hales'map of 1814, drawn after completion of India Wharf and Broad Street develpments, but before Central Wharf, clearly shows the contrast between the old, irregular, crowded wharves north of Long Wharf . and the smooth edge of India Street and wharf. It was not until well after Bulfinch had departed and shortly after Boston became a city in 1822, that major changes began on the northern arc.

The Federal period had ended and the Greek Revival era in architecture was beginning. Also brick was giving way to granite as the preferred facade material. A handful of architects who trained with Bulfinch were left to pursue the newly emerging style, most notable of whom were Alexander Parris and Solomon Willard. It was Parris who Mayor Josiah Quincy selected to design an elongated 2-story granite market building, 555 feet long, flanked by two rows of 4-story granite-faced warehouses of similar length, in an attempt to bring the new orderliness to the Faneuil Hall/Dock Square area. A plan surveyed in 1823 shows the three buildings superimposed on the then existing piers and docks. Six new streets without curves were formed, including the first legs of Fulton and Commercial Streets. This was the beginning of a process which would replace the dozen and a half wharves between Long Wharf and Lewis Wharf within a few years. Two plans dated May 30 and November 12, 1827 show a new "Marginal Street" 65 feet wide cutting diagonally from Lewis Wharf to connect with Commercial Street at the foot of the new market and warehouses. All streets are straight and wide.[95] With the laying out of Commercial street through to State Street,

the reduction in length of Long Wharf was begun.

The cornerstone of the Chelmsford granite Quincy Market building was laid April 25, 1825. It opened August 26, 1826.

Following the extension of Commercial Street, the new wharves were completed in a relatively short time. T-Wharf, which began in the early 18th century as a remnant of the Barricado. attached to the north side of Long Wharf, kept extending its length seaward until in the 1830's it ranged as far out as Long Wharf. It was first called "Minot's T", later "Brimmer's T". Through most of its life it was populated with wooden buildings, from time to time tumbled down.

City Wharf was constructed off Commercial Street soon after the market was completed. It first appeared, without buildings, on a plan dated December 30, 1830.[96] A plan of May 1, 1832 shows a single row of "stores now building."[97] By 1853 it had fused with Long Wharf and by April 3, 1856, Mercantile Wharf had been built on its north side, with a range of lots and buildings designed by Gridley Bryant under construction, and a new street called Mercantile Street at the water's edge.[98]

The granite range of 32 bays and 66 stores on Commercial Wharf, designed by Isaiah Rogers, is shown on the May 1, 1832 plan as "Stores now building."

Lewis Wharf, so named on Hales' 1814 map with 3 wood buildings, appeared in the same location on Bonner's map of 1722 at approximately the same length. It acquired its granite row, designed by Richard Bond, in 1836-40.

By 1857 the transformation of the arc of Great Cove from a motley collection of thirty or so small, irregular wharves, covered with disheveled-looking wooden buildings to a well ordered array of six extended piers with long ranges of brick and granite warehouses, was complete. Only maverick T-Wharf remained in a somewhat unkempt state as a reminder of earlier days.

It was during the 1850s that harbor activity reached its peak. After the Civil War its long decline began with the age of steam and competition from the railroads which had been building since the 1830s.

From the earliest days, Anne and Fish Streets (combined as North Street in 1852) ran parallel to the shore with wharves projecting from their eastern edge. With the laying out of Commercial Street in 1827 and filling the intervening wharves, docks and flats, Anne and Fish moved well inland. Fulton Street, plus several cross streets, were engraved on this newly filled land. Fulton Street acquired several 4-story brick commercial blocks with

granite bases in 1838, many of which still stand in varying degrees of alteration. In 1844, Ferry, Barrett and Shoe and Leather Streets were covered with similar 4-story brick warehouses.

Nathaniel Dearborn, writing in Boston Notions in 1848, graphically described the renewal of Anne Street "which has of late years housed the most degraded part of the city population (and) is under the levelling application of the pick axe and the broom...clearing off the old rubbish... and in its place the beaufiful 'Gerrish Block' with granite front erected in 1846, and the Hitchborn Block on the same street, and a new Block on the site of Old Eastern Hotel...may enterprise speed the time when no such extensive evidence of depravity and wretched squalid vice and stench pool, shall greet the eye or nostrils the passenger..."[99]

The influence of Bulfinch's brick row house and warehouse row model, often with an added stone base, spread rapidly during the first two decades of the 19th century, promoted by such merchant developers as Harrison Gray Otis and Uriah Cotting. By 1816 their new Cornhill Corporation had succeeded in gaining permission to cut a new street connecting Scollay and Dock Squares, roughly parallel to Brattle Street. The following conditions were published at the sale of Lots on July 13, 1816: "The buildings to be built with brick, four stories in height, the first story front is to be of stone...must be completed in four months from the date of sale."[100] On September 20th, Cotting obtained a mortgage from Charles R. Codman for "a certain lot of land, with the Brick Store now building."[101] Originally called Cheapside, the street was renamed Cornhill in 1829. The row was substantially altered in the 1850s and survives in part today as Sears Crescent.

16 years earlier, the first "planned development" in the Liberty Square area was put together by John, Thomas and Jonathan Harris, merchants, who had purchased Woodward's (earlier Borland's) Wharf, located at the northeast corner of Kilby and Water Streets, abutting Oliver's Dock, from Ebenezer Woodward in 1793.[102] They received permission in 1799 to fill up what was left of Oliver's Dock[103] which was properly timed to coincide with their plans to redevelop the wharf into commercial space. In 1800 the Proprietors subdivided into 20 lots the western-most portion of the wharf into 4 groups of contiguous lots. The lots were sold off individually subject to the same type of strict conditions in the slightly later Broad-India Street developments. The desire was for uniformity in contrast to the diversity of the structures they replaced.

Most of these buildings were destroyed in the fire of April 9, 1825, which

swept along Kilby Street from State through Liberty Square, consuming 53 structures in its wake.

The present-day shape of Liberty Square was essentially formed on completion of the Harris development shortly after 1800. It had, however, been a clearly identifiable, significant place since Oliver's Dock was wharved out in 1660. The name was officially changed to Liberty Square on January 24, 1793, in celebration of the French Revolution. Although the buildings which currently bound the square date from 1873 to 1926, it is the only square from the 17th and 18th centuries in central Boston to retain its integrity.

Among the squares which have totally vanished are Scollay, Bowdoin, Brattle, Church, Adams, Haymarket Squares, plus Washington Place. Creek Square is ragged and Dock Square and Market Square have lost their edges. Pemberton Square survives as a space without a hint of its original scale or character.

Following Gardiner Greene's death in 1832, Patrick Tracy Jackson, who, with Francis Cabot Lowell had set up the country's first complete cotton mill in Waltham in 1813, purchased the Greene estate along with other mansion houses on the east slope of Cotton Hill overlooking King's Chapel and its burying ground. His motives were speculative and he proceeded to demolish the mansion houses and cut down the hill with 120 oxen, 60 Yankees and 199 Irishmen to fill the Charles north of Causeway Street ~~for the~~ adjacent to the terminus of the Boston and Lowell Railroad, of which he was treasurer. The earth moving was accomplished between May 5 and October 5, 1835. On October 6 he sold the lots at auction on the site, according to a plan of the same date showing contiguous lots organized around a new square called Phillips Place with rows facing Somerset Street and Tremont Street as well.[104] There were 64 lots in all and they carried the types of conditions which had become standard for both residential and commercial projects. In this case no stables were permitted, and front walls were to be of face brick or hammered stone. The final product was a group of fairly uniform red brick 3-and-4-story row houses, some with bow fronts, similar to Louisburg Square. Phillips Place was renamed Pemberton Square in 1838 and the two rows on Tremont were named Tremont Row in 1847. In 1848 Dearborn referred to "The two Brick blocks on Tremont Street, between Beacon Street and the Engine house north, were erected in 1835 and 6, comprising twenty eight stores of thee and four stories, by various owners."[105]

The Albion Hotel was added on the corner of Beacon Street in 1839.

The completion of George Clough's massive granite Suffolk County Court House in 1891 signaled the end of Pemberton Square as a residential enclave. While the Court House and the all too open space remain, the remaining other buildings succumbed to Center Plaza in 1969.

By 1840 few buildings remained residential between Pemberton Square and the waterfront. During this period many of the earlier brick and wood buildings were replaced with blocks of stores, mostly with granite fronts. As had been the case in the preceeding decades, the commercial row was the pattern rather than the individual building which was the case in the 17th and 18th centuries, and would become more the fashion again by the 1860s.

Dearborn reported 3 granite blocks and 1 brick block built on State Street from 1845 to 1847; 4 blocks plus 4 individual buildings of granite on Washington from 1843 to 1846, and 8 blocks of stores and warehouses on Milk Street from 1844 to 1846, including the "Old South Block" of 3 warehouses on the site of the 1710 Parsonage House behind the meeting house. These blocks proudly bore names like "Bowdoin Block" and "Milk Street Block".[106] Thomas Dawes had designed "South Row", a block of buildings next to Old South on Washington Street in 1800. By 1846 these had been replaced by a "Block of stores to be erected" according to a deed dated March 2 of that year.[107]

One of Boston's most impressive Greek Revival granite buildings of this period was the new Custom House authorized by Congress in 1835 and constructed between 1837 and 1847, from plans by Ammi Burnham Young. It was a monumental granite Doric temple capped by a Roman dome, set on 3,000 wood piles on filled land fronting on India Street, between Central and Long Wharves.

Ten years after completion of the Custom House, the shoreline between these two wharves was again extended farther out into the dock for a new block of granite warehouses. Attached to a deed dated June 7, 1857 were the catalog and terms of sale for the 16 warehouse lots plus the "Architect's Circular" containing a detailed description of the warehouses to be erected as designed by Gridley J.F. Bryant, to be named the State Street Block.[108] The resulting open space which surrounded the Custon House was named McKinley Square in 1902. In 1913-15 Boston's first skyscraper was erected over the Custom House dome, designed by Peabody and Stearns.

The 1850s and 1860s saw the beginnings of a return to the individualization of buildings. While in most cases they were not free standing, they tended more and more toward elaborate detail which set them decoratively apart from their abutters. The strong vertical and horizontal simplicity of the Greek

Revival gave way to a variety of more picturesque styles: Gothic Revival, Renaissance Revival, Italianate, French Second Empire. Granite continued as the preferred facade material but various colored sandstones and occasionally cast iron appeared. Among the few surviving examples are the Italianate granite warehouse at 50 Broad Street of 1853 by Charles E. Parker, the 1855 brownstone building at 52 Devonshire Street by Gridley Bryant, the ca 1859 7-story Renaissance Revival cast iron building at 112-116 State Street, 33 Union Street, a 5-story Italianate tan sandstone loft building dating from 1861, and the 1870, 4-story Second Empire granite Wesleyan Hall on Bromfield Street designed by Hammett and Joseph Billings.

By the time of Boston's worst fire, on November 9, 1872, these picturesque styles were reaching their flamboyant zenith. While the fire was nothing short of disastrous, both economically and architectecturally, it provided an opportunity for rebuilding "Commercial Palaces" of even greater exhuberance. Of the 65 acres leveled, most were south of the study area. 110 of the 776 destroyed buildings were within the area, mostly on Milk, Water, Congress Streets and Liberty Square. One major casualty of the fire was granite as the preferred material, due to its spalling and exploding under extreeme heat. In its place were brick, various colored sandstones and marble, although granite reappeared to some degree later. The scale of the new buildings was, in general, not substantially greater than those built immediately before the fire, but the trend toward individualizing the designs continued. Boston's building department was fathered by the fire.

Post Office Square came into being soon after the fire, on April 18, 1873.[109] The new Post Office, described as "an enormous pile of Cape-Ann granite, with an iron roof,"[110] was half-built at the time, having been started in 1869, and survived to go on to completion in 1885. It was elaborately complimented - or competed with - by two spectacular adjoining white stone structures, the Mutual Life and New England Mutual buildings on the south side of the square in 1874, designed by Peabody and Stearns and N.J. Bradlee, respectively, two leading architectural firms. They departed the scene for the Post Office Square garage in 1945.

Three other major changes in the city occurred just prior to the 1872 fire, examples of the type of radical surgery which would reappear on a wider scale in the 1950s. On December 18, 1868 Mayor Shurtleff approved a City Council vote to lay out Atlantic Avenue from Broad Street at Rowes Wharf to Commercial Street at Eastern Avenue, with fill to come from Fort

Hill. Straight as an arrow and 100 feet wide, Atlantic Avenue, following the approximate trail of the Barricado, sliced through India, Central, Long, T, Commercial and Lewis Wharves, splitting their elegant masonry rows into two embarassed segments, much as the Central Artery repeated in the 1950s. The avenue was completed and the land behind it filled by 1872, and once stately Fort Hill and its many buildings were gone. The newly filled land was quickly built up, populated with warehouse blocks and the extensive Clinton and Mercantile Markets, a series of ornamented sheet-metal covered buildings constructed in 1873 and replaced by the Waterfront Park a little over a century later. In 1901 Atlantic Avenue acquired an elevated trolley line complete with elaborate stations. It closed in 1938 and was demolished four years later.

Washington Street was extended, again in a straight line, from Cornhill to Haymarket Square on November 6, 1872. The new street, which tapered from a width of 110 feet in Dock Square to 40 feet at Haymarket, cut through a series of buildings and streets, some at extreme acute angles, leaving stiletto-shapp corners. Haymarket Square was laid out in 1839 and was presided over by the graceful Greek Revival facade of the Boston and Maine Depot.

Most of the buildings lost in the 1872 fire had been replaced within a few years. By 1880 the exhuberant Commercial Palace era was over and there was a return to less picturesque styles. At the same time buildings were increasing in both height and bulk. The industrialization of the building process was replacing handcraft. The elevator made heights accessible and Chicago was providing a compelling model.

Two notable buildings constructed on Temont Street in 1883, both designed by Bradlee, Winslow and Wetherell, exhibit this new restraint of detail and increased size. They are the 7-story red brick and brownstone Hemenway Building at the corner of Court Street and the 6-story sandstone Phillips Building at the corner of Hamilton Place, elegantly detailed in the late Renaissance Revival style. The Queen Anne Revival brownstone Claflin Building of 1884 at 20 Beacon Street, by William G. Preston, is another fine example from the period. The 10-story Fisk Building and the 11-story Exchange Building, built in 1889 and 1891 at 89 and 53 State Street, both designed by Peabody and Stearns, were robust examples of the Renaissance Revival mode rendered in quarry-faced granite, on the verge of being skyscrapers.

Boston's first and finest skyscraper, the 14-story Ames Building at 1

Court Street, hovered over the skyline from 1889 until the Custom House rose 30 stories in 1915. The Ames Building, of ashlar and quarry-faced granite, was designed by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, successor firm to H.H. Richardson, in the Romanesque Revival variation that he perfected. Also by the same architects is the richly textured Flour and Grain Exchange of 1892 at Milk and India Streets. Diagonally across the Old State House from the Ames Building are two significant free-standing towers, typical in height of State Street in the 1890s and early 20th century. They are the 11-story Second Brazer Building of 1896, on the site of the First Church, an elaborately detailed Beaux Arts building by Cass Gilbert (of Woolworth Building fame), and the Worthington Building, a 10-story light brick, steel frame structure by Carl Fehmer, built in 1894.

Limestone was to become the material most widely used for the Classical Revival office building of the first quarter of the 20th century. The 9-story International Trust Building at 45 Milk Street, built in two sections from plans of William G. Preston in 1893 and 1906, is one of the earliest and most effective uses of this rather [illegible] neutral material. The India Building of 1902 at 84 State Street is a restrained granite structure of 11 stories by Peabody and Stearns. The 11-story Board of Trade, designed by Winslow and Bigelow in 1901, occupies an entire block formerly composed of small buildings, at State, Broad and India Streets.

There are 13 buildings built between 1893 and 1934 occupying entire blocks in the study area, indicative of the significant change in building bulk from earlier decades.

The pace of building slowed and the quality of design lowered during the two decades from 1926 to 1947. The depression and the Second World War were obvious factors as well as the general economic lethargy in Boston. The 14-story Batterymarch Building by Harold Field Kellogg, is an unusual brick Art Deco example which rose from its own block in 1927-28. The 22-story limestone Post Office and Federal Court House replaced its Second Empire predecessor on Post Office Square in 1934. The architects wereCram and Fergusson.

There were few changes in the street patter between the 1870s and 1948. The total number of buildings decreased and the sizes of those constructed continued to increase.

Following the Y-shaped path formed by State and Court Streets as the base, and Tremont Street and its extensions from Park through Bowdoin Square, as the arms,

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through some of its history, it is possible to experience in summary form the visual and historical richness of Boston's development prior to the mid-20th century. The expansion and contraction of the streets, the rich and subtle sequences of spaces and the architectural variety provided almost limitless visual options.

Called by various names in the early days, such as "the broad street" and "the market" street and, in 1708, King Street, State Street was the "main street" in the first years as the location of the meeting house, the market, early residences and access to the water. It was the social, religious, commercial and residential center. Although today it seems narrow, it began as "the broad street" and remained relatively wide through most of its history. At first lined with small, primitive detached dwellings, it soon compacted and by 1722 it appeared on Bonner's map as almost unbroken rows of 2-and 3-story buildings.

Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre, which took place just east of the Old State House on March 5, 1770, clearly shows the rows of abutting, mostly 3-story colonial style buildings with side gable roofs well populated with dormers and sizeable chimneys. The slight irregularity of the street's edges is apparent. According to Pemberton in 1794, "on each side this street are large handsome brick buildings, occupied as dwelling houses, publick houses, warehouses and auction offices. It is the general mart of business."[111]

The 1796 Boston Directory lists 3 banks in Boston, all on State Street. In 1807 the number had increased to 4, with 6 insurance companies added. The August 3, 1799 Columbian Centinel reported: "The Union Bank House is undergoing such useful and ornamental repairs, as will add much to the beauty of State Street." These repairs were to the old Apthorp mansion and were designed by Charles Bulfinch. He also designed the brick Bank of the United States in 1798 (demolished 1824) and the stone-faced Massachusetts Bank in 1838. Three of the insurance companies, side by side with the banks, were also by Bulfinch: a brick building for Suffolk Insurance Company, a stone structure for New England Marine and an office for Boston Marine.
An important addition to the street in 1842 was the Merchants Exchange, with its monumental 3-story Greek Revival temple front of Quincy granite.
Located on the site later occupied by the Exchange Building, it housed banks, offices, a hotel, post office and an 80 by 58 foot hall. Also in 1842,

Brazer's, a 3-story bowfronted granite Greek Revival structure arose on the earlier site of the First Church. It was replaced in 1896 by Cass Gilbert's Second Brazer Building.

State Street has continued to the present as Boston's financial street. Most of the earlier buildings were replaced in the 1850s and 1860s and these, in turn between 1890 and 1910 by larger structures averaging 10 stories.

Court Street, as an extension of State, shared some of its character and changes but was differentiated by accommodating first the prison and later the court house. Before 1708 it was known as Prison Lane, then Queen Street and finally Court Street in 1788. The old Gaol stood on the site of the 1912 City Hall Annex (now School Committee offices). It was succeeded in the 18th century by a 3-story brick court house with an octagonal cupola[112] which, in turn, was replaced by a second court house, this in granite with a Doric portico, in 1833-36, set in newly laid out Court Square.

Tremont Street and its extensions from Park through Bowdoin Square has a complex, multi-layered history. Each of the several blocks and spaces had its own identity and rich background, but all were linked in a fascinating visual progression.

From Park to Beacon/School Streets it was Common Street in the 18th century, passing the 1729 Grainary on one corner of the 1660 Granary Burying Ground, opposite well spaced houses. By 1814 there was the Park Street Church, designed by Peter Banner in 1809, along with series of still detached but more compact wood houses in addition to brick rows leading into Hamilton Place, Bumpstead Place (no longer extant) and Bromfield's Lane. In 1827 Isaiah Rogers designed the granite Greek temple-fronted Tremont Theater on the east side between Bromfield and School Streets. It was acquired by the Baptists in 1843, but burned in 1852. Two succeeding temples burned in 1879 and 1893. The present 8-story, ornately detailed terra cotta and limestone Tremont Temple was designed by Clarence H. Blackall and George F. Newton and built in 1894. It houses the elaborately ornamented 3,000 seat Converse Hall.

One year after completing the Tremont Theater, Isaiah Rogers turned his attention across the street to the Beacon Street corner where he designed the world's first Luxury Hotel, Tremont House. Built of Quincy granite, 4 stories high, it was completed in 1829 and survived until 1894, replaced by the present 11-story granite office building by Winslow and Wetherell.

Tremont House xxx, which set a standard for hotels in Boston and the U.S., was Boston's first "modern" hotel, and first decent hotel since the 7-story 1808 Exchange Coffee House burned in 1818.

Boston's 1631 Burying ground on the north east corner of Tremont and School Streets, was intruded upon by the first King's Chapel building in 1688 as an Anglican affront to the Puritan tradition. The small wood church was expanded in 1710 and replaced by the present Quincy granite structure with its sumptucus Georgian interior in 1748-54. It was designed by Peter Harrison as the first major public stone building in America.

By xxx 1860 Tremont Street, from Park to Court, presented itself as solid block fronts of 3-to 5-story buildings interrupted only by the two burying grounds and cross streets. The 1846 Boston Museum, designed by Hammatt Billings and the 1859 Second Tremont Temple, both elaborate Renaissance Revival structures, stood out among the other simple store-fronted structures.

North of Court, Tremont's extension, called Sudbury in 1722 and Court in 1814, became less sedate and more varied, the legendary Scollay Square, named for a narrow wedge of buildings in the center of the street, originally of wood, replaced by William Scollay's 4-story brick block in 1795, changed from a setting for Cotton Hill's 18th century mansion houses to a turbulant inelegant commercial and entertainment area in the 20th century. Throughout its history it was architecturally and urbanistically rich and varied. Scollay's buildings were removed in 1870 and replaced by a fanciful subway station in 1898.

Continuing northwest from Scollay Square, the street constricted and then expanded into Bowdoin Square, a much more elegant space. Although Bowdoin Square xx had existed as a fork in the road during the 17th century, and John Bonner had several houses edging the fork on his 1722 map, it did not attain its status as a formal residential enclave until after it received its name in 1788, and Bulfinch had designed a series of mansion houses for its elite beginning in 1791.

It was appropriate that Bulfinch should be recalled to the area since he was born there in 1763 in the 3-story ca 1740 gambrel house of his grandfather, Dr. Thomas Bulfinch. Among the houses he was responsible for were a 3-story, 60-foot-square brick house for Joseph Coolidge in 1792, his own house, a block away in Bulfinch Street Place, in 1793, the near-by first Harrison Gray Otis House in 1795, a house in Bulfinch Street for

Joseph Coolidge, Jr., also in 1795, the Kirk Boott house in 1804, and the Chelmsford granite Blake-Tuckerman double mansion at the head of the square in 1814-15.

Construction of Richard Bond's gothic Bowdoin Square Baptist Church in 1840 signaled a change in the area. In 1846 Kirk Boott's mansion house was enlarged and added to as the Revere House Hotel, designed by William Washburn. Also in 1846, a 4-story, 3-store granite front block was constructed by developer Gardner Chilson at the corner of Court and Bulfinch Streets.

From the 1860s and on Bowdoin Square deteriorated as wealthy Bostonians migrated to the Back Bay, with the grand houses becoming boarding houses or succumbing to demolition. The Coolidge House Hotel appeared on the Bulfinch birthplace site next to the church in the early 1860s and both were replaced by 1930 when the present 11-story limestone art deco telephone building, by Densmore, Le Clear and Robbins, was constructed. The Revere House was demolished for a fire house in 1919. Bulfinch's own house, which had been converted to the Hotel Waterston, was razed for the Saltonstall Building in 1961. The square itself no longer exists in any form.

School Street has experienced an unusually rich history, particularly in the development of religious, civic and commercial institutions. Boston Latin, founded in 1635 as the first public school in the country, completed the first of its four buildings on its namesake street in 1645 on the rear portion of the King's Chapel site. Across the street, John Mico's 60-foot 2½ story brick mansion house of 1704, after passing through a series of owner/occupants including Nicholas Boylston, Lt. Governor Moses Gill and Ward Nicholas Boylston, became the Hotel Boylston in 1829 and was replaced in 1854 by Harvey D. Parker's new white marble hotel, designed by William Washburn and completed in 1856. In 1860 an east wing followed the demolition of Horticultural Hall which was built but 16 years earlier on the site of the 4th Latin school house. A French chateau was added to the Parker House complex on the corner of Tremont in 1883-4 and the whole rich amalgam was replaced by the present hotel, designed by Desmond and Lord, in 1927.

On May 4, 1810, the Selectmen announced that they were"ready to proceed upon the foundation of the new Court House."[113] Bulfinch, their chairman, was the architect. In 1840-41 the Court House was refitted as City Hall, the buildings fronting on School Street were removed and the area was made into a square. The present "Old" City Hall replaced the Bulfinch building in 1862-65, designed by Bryant and Gilman.

The first Huguenot church was located at 20 School Street from 1716 to

1741. A Congregational church was in residence there from 1748 to 1788 when it became the first Catholic Church in Boston until its demolition in 1803.

The first of Park Street's four distinct periods was rural, simply as a path across the Common to the Beacon in 1640. Its second phase, as a collection of public buildings devoted to poor, vagrants and criminals, began in 1662 with the construction of an Almshouse near the Beacon Street corner. It burned in 1682 but the town voted to replace it on December 16 of that year.[114] In 1720 a new 20 x 50 foot Bridewell (House of Correction) joined the Almshouse and in 1738 a Work House was built next to the Bridewell.

Jonathan Williams and others received a timber permit in 1729 to construct a grainery on the corner of Common (Tremont) Street. The long wood building went out of public use in 1795 and was replaced by the Park Street Church in 1809.

The sale of lots by the town in 1801 ushered in Park Street's third life which took the form of Bulfinch Row, a group of elegant townhouses mostly constructed about 1804. These became homes to such notable citizens as three members of the distinguished Warren family, General Joseph Warren's daughter, Elizabeth Welles, and leading surgeons Dr. John Warren and his son, Dr. John Collins Warren, founders of the Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, respectively. With the last resident departing in 1907, the street moved into its fourth and final phase, accommodating a mix of commercial and institutional uses in buildings dating from 1804 to 1971.

The lethargy of the 1930s and 1940s was shaken by the Master Highway Plan of 1948 and the Federal Housing Act of 1949, which brought the Central Artery and "urban renewal" to Boston in quick succession. Atlantic Avenue had given but a faint hint of the devastation that would result from a six-lane elevated expressway with frequent on and off ramps snaking through the heart of the city cutting off the North End and waterfront. Hundreds of buildings were destroyed or dismembered. A number of streets were eliminated while others were interrupted or forced to gyrate in awkward ways to lock into the new system. In terms of any standard of urban design, the Artery was an alien, perhaps from far off Los Angeles. It created an unkempt wasteland at ground level, a more profound blight than any that was attacked by the urban renewal process. With its northern and southern sections completed in 1954 and 1959, it stands as a monument to governmental insensitivity and ineptitude.

During the next decade the city was to receive the second of the one/two punches it did nothing to deserve. It all began with a 1953 report by the Urban Redevelopment Division of the Boston Housing authority declaring the West End to be a totally unsavory environment. In 1957 the Boston Redevelopment Authority was established as an offshoot of the BHA and in 1960 merged with the City Planning Board. In September of 1960, Mayor John F. Collins announced "a $90 million Development Program for Boston,"[115] the most far reaching urban renewal program in the country. A number of areas were designated for the Federal largesse including the Government Center, Central Business District and the Waterfront. Writing in 1967, Edward J. Logue, BRA Director from 1960 through 1967, stated: "In truth it can be said that our major goal in 1960 was the making of a 'New Boston'."[116] The "new" was accurate, the "Boston" was not. Central Arteries at ground level replaced the rich and intricate network of Boston's streets in the Government Center project area. 29 streets, lanes and squares were totally eliminated, 11 additional streets were erased in large part and the remaining 5 were widened. Four new streets were added without regard to previous patterns. Only 10 of the hundreds of buildings survived, with only the Ames Building and Sears Crescent being historic. What emerged was a series of super blocks without definition. The insensitivity of Logue was apparent in his reference to Scollay Square: "The nature of the old Scollay Square area was such that no other approach (than total demolition) was possible or feasible. The net result was an opportunity to eliminate a hopelessly inadequate system of narrow winding streets and to replace them with a few major boulevards in scale with the Government Center development and the estimated traffic volumes."[117]

Logue hired architect I.M. Pei to produce the Government Center master plan. According to the late respected historian, Walter Muir Whitehill, "I.M. Pei wished not only to preserve the significant historic buildings in the area, but to create spaces in which immense new ones might be placed in harmonious relationship with their older neighbors."[118] Pei obviously failed in both respects as did most of the architects who designed the "immense new ones". Boston City Hall is the only major building of distinction to emerge in the Government Center plan, but its isolation in its vast plaza sets it apart from its "older neighbors". Clearly the tight, compact spaces of what is left of the old Boston are far more congenial to human activity than the vast, amorphous, irrelevant expanses of the New Boston, populated by lonesome giants.

While the urban renewal juggernaught continued through the White years, especially effecting the waterfront, the massive high-rise private development emerged as threatening to destroy the city indifferent but equally lethal way. Only the rehabilitation of Quincy Market, an effort not without flaws, suggested any sympathy for the historic city.

What has happened to Boston since 1950 has been radical surgery on its street network, the elimination of most of its intimate squares, a staggering reduction in the number of buildings and a corresponding increase in their individual size, and an accompanying proliferation of vast, ill-defined, left over open space.

In 1938, when the last insurance atlas was published, there were 149 streets, lanes and squares in the study area, in 1986 there were 107. The number of buildings dropped from 1,742 to 522, during the same period. In 1938 there were only three buildings over 14 stories in height, today there are 21, 10 of which exceed 35 floors.

In separating the buildings which exist in 1986 by development periods, two burying grounds but no buildings survive from 1630-1705, 9 buildings remain from 1706-1783, 32 from 1784-1822, 215 from 1823-1872, 40 from 1873-1888, 137 from 1889-1925, 29 from 1926-1947, 29 from 1948-1969, 31 from 1970-1986. In both 1938 and 1986 counts, individual units in a row are counted separately, i.e. North Market is 23 buildings. In 1938 there were 1,742 buildings built by or before 1938, in 1986 there are only about 460 that date from before 1938, for a net loss of 1,282 historic buildings. Looking at the study area (visually) with these statistics in mind mandates the conclusion that Boston cannot afford to lose any more buildings 50 or more years old which still retain their integrity and/or play a role in completing a block. Therefore it is much easier to single out the few which are expendable than to list the hundreds which are not. Examples of the former would include 66 Chatham Street (an 1830s building minus its upper floors), 70 and 94 Tremont (for the same reason).

The Boston Landmarks Commission committed a fundamental error in judgement in evaluating the results of its 1980 survey of central Boston by assigning numerical values to individual buildings rather than giving primary consideration to the ensemble or to the contribution these buildings make to the street and, therefore, to the city. The BLC compounded its mistake by underrating many of the buildings, in some cases to the point of denying deserving examples consideration as landmarks. One particularly

glaring example of not giving a building its due is the low category 4 bestowed on the previously mentioned Phillips Building, at 120 Tremont Street, which is a seminal building in the development of the late Renaissance Revival style.

Preservation in Boston has too long focussed on the handful of Freedom Trail type of buildings while ignoring the more subtle levels of significance which the vast majority of the city's historic structures possess. A cohesive and vital city is not composed of individual landmarks but of streets lined with varieties of plain and fancy buildings that in combination produce an enriching visual experience. Therefore preservation should control what goes up as much as what comes down. Rather than removing existing buildings, first consideration should be given to removing vacant and parking lots which are the city's true blight. In 1986 there are 58 vacant parcels in 36 separated locations, most of them having been in this state for many years.

The structure of Boston's historic street pattern precludes extended vistas from most locations. The logical and natural vista is short and enclosed. One exception is the view of the Custom House Block on Long Wharf from India Place, which will be enhanced with the depression of the Central Artery. Most extended views within the city and toward the water are compromised by out of scale and/or undistinguished, relatively new construction. Some intimate vistas which should be preserved include views into Liberty Square along Water Street in both directions and from Oliver and Batterymarch Streets; also, along Milk Street from Oliver to India Street, along Broad Street from Milk to State and vice versa, India Street panorama from Milk toward State, along Central Street from the Artery to McKinley Square, The view up State Street from the Artery to the Old State House is impressive but compromised by One Boston Place the Exchange tower. Views of the Park Street Church spire from Hamilton and Tremont Places are inspiring, and the vista of the east side of Tremont Street between Park and Court in both directions is of visual interest.

In the future the city needs to reassert the primacy of horizontal over vertical density, which is the chief difference between the historic and modern city.

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